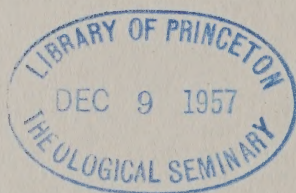


**Interpreter of Buddhism  
to the West:**

**SIR EDWIN ARNOLD**

**Brooks Wright**





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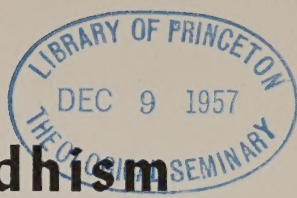


Interpreter of Buddhism to the West:

Sir Edwin Arnold







# **Interpreter of Buddhism to the West:**

SIR EDWIN <sup>✓</sup>ARNOLD

By Brooks <sup>✓</sup>Wright

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FOR MY FATHER





## FOREWORD

This book had its beginning in June of 1943. I was then stationed at New Malir Cantonment, near Karachi, at the start of an extensive tour of India and Ceylon, conducted through the courtesy of the United States Air Force. From time to time a bookseller came to the camp and spread his wares out on the sand beside the mess hall. Most of his offerings were pornographic—one was called *The Adventures of Erotic Edna*—but among the rest was a thin paper-bound volume that caught my eye: *The Song Celestial*, by Sir Edwin Arnold. That book was my first introduction to the Bhagavad Gita and the poet who had translated it. In retrospect, I doubt if I understood much of it then, but it did give me my first glimpse of Indian literature and suggested something of the impact of that literature on the West. After the war I returned to Harvard and began to read more of Arnold and other Victorian orientalist. Gradually this project took shape, first as a term paper, then as a doctoral thesis, finally in this form. I have tried to give not only the facts of Arnold's life, but also an estimate of his importance in the intellectual history of his time. The part he played was slight, but it was an honorable one, intensely interesting, and of importance for those who are concerned with the relationship of the Western world with the Orient.

In this work I have been greatly helped by several members of the Arnold family, especially by Mr. Julian Arnold of Redlands, California, who loaned a copy of a biography of his father, still in manuscript, on which this is partly based. Professor Howard Mumford Jones directed the writing of the thesis, and my father, Professor C. H. C. Wright, corrected it, criticized it, and gave me the benefit of his knowledge of Victorian literature, which in itself has been worth several libraries.

BROOKS WRIGHT

Brooklyn, December, 1956.





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## CHAPTER I

### THE STUDENT: 1832-1855

This book is the story of a reputation. Its subject is a man whose writings were once to be found side by side with *The Idylls of the King* and *Evangeline* in middle-class parlors throughout Great Britain and America. For a few years it seemed as though he would be Tennyson's successor to the laureateship. Then, almost as abruptly as it had arisen, his following melted away; by the time of his death the critics were referring to him patronizingly, if at all, and today the man whose name was once a household word is known only to a few specialists. The reasons for this bubble-like reputation are interesting; the man behind the reputation is more interesting still.

Edwin Arnold was born on July 10, 1832, at Gravesend, Kent, a seaport on the Thames estuary. He was the second son of Robert Coles Arnold and Sarah Pizzey Arnold, of Whartons, Framfield, in Sussex. Both in Sussex and in Kent the Arnolds represented that class of sturdy country gentry which was then the backbone of English society. Their ambitions went no higher than to be leaders in their community, and nothing in their history gave any hint of the outburst of literary activity which was to distinguish them.

George Arnold, grandfather of the poet, was a man of courage and common sense who emerged from provincial obscurity for one brief moment in 1797 when, as Justice of the Peace for Kent, he helped keep order during the mutiny in the Royal Navy at the Nore. There is a family tradition that he refused a knighthood for his services. His son, Robert Coles Arnold, the poet's father, was one of twenty-one children. There was not much inheritance to divide among such a family, so what position he achieved was due to his enterprise alone. He was connected with running the first steam passenger boats on the Thames; he owned a small fishing fleet and imported Norwegian lobsters for the London market;

he held land in several counties and was Justice of the Peace as his father had been before him. At a time when such public spirit was uncommon, he helped purchase the old Block House Fort by the Thames, an historical monument which was presented to the town and so saved from destruction. His grandson remembers him as portly, white-haired and red-faced, with an aristocratic disposition to gout.

The Arnolds, in short, were solid but unpoetic, and Edwin attributed much of his artistic sensitivity to the influence of his mother, Sarah Arnold. The records say little of her except that she came from Hawkwell, in Essex, and that her father was of a yeoman family established in the neighborhood for many generations. His name is variously given as Daniel Pisey, Pizzey, Pizzy, Pezzi and Pizzi; perhaps there was Italian blood in the family somewhere. Her grandchildren remember Sarah Arnold as a woman of charming temper, strong religious beliefs, and a deep love of music. She was vigorous as well, for she lived to be ninety-one and climbed a five-bar gate shortly before her death.

There were six children in this family, four boys and two girls. The eldest son was George Matthews Arnold, Edwin's senior by six years, who studied law and followed his father's footsteps as a local worthy. The biographical dictionaries list him as Justice of the Peace, County Alderman, Deputy Lieutenant, and eight times mayor of Gravesend. The third son was Arthur, who, in defiance of both heredity and environment, became a radical M.P., president of the Free Land League, and the author of several books on land reform. As the editor of a radical paper, *The Echo*, Arthur found himself in opposition to his brother's more conservative *Daily Telegraph*, and at the end of his career he was made a knight, thus receiving the ancient reward which Britain so often gives her radical politicians. The fourth son was Augustus, the senior partner of a Gravesend law firm. He made less of a splash in the world than his brothers and spent his entire life in Kent, dabbling in local history and antiquities.



Arnold's childhood was spent on his father's estate at Southchurch Wick, in Essex, near the mouth of the Thames, and here he acquired his abiding love of nature, fishing along the Crouch and hunting for nests among the hedgerows. One of his earliest impressions was the perfume of wallflowers beneath his nursery window, and another was the experience of being lifted in the arms of a gardener to peep into a bird's nest where three blue eggs lay. These memories, dating back to the age of two or three years, always remained fresh and vivid for him.

When he was five years old, Victoria was proclaimed Queen, and sixty years later he could still recall the military display, the fanfare of trumpets, and the reading of the proclamation which marked the new reign. As he returned with his nurse from the ceremony, a man in the street was selling a novelty: lucifer matches at half-pence each. In the Arnold household the only source of fire was still the old-fashioned flint and steel, from which sparks were struck into smutty tinder to light the candles. Life in England was simple then: the steam locomotive was in its infancy, the telegraph was not yet in general use, and most of the technological progress of the nineteenth century still lay ahead.

The sea, which ebbed and flowed past the docks of Gravesend, continued to fascinate him all his life; indeed, Arnold believed that if literature had not claimed him, he would have been a sailor. The ships of the Royal Navy, based nearby, were as familiar to him as the faces of his own family, and the stories of England's great sea fights were among his favorite childhood reading. His father encouraged these tastes by giving him a whole basket of books on exploration and the sea, and little Edwin spent many hours lying on his stomach, his chin on his hands, reading the old-fashioned folio and quarto volumes of the adventures of Dampier and Drake, Raleigh and Frobisher, Cook and La Pérouse.

If the boy Arnold loved the sea with a passion, he loved reading no less, and devoured not only the ancient travel books which his father gave him, but more formidable works as well. He was

only seven or eight when, finding himself possessor of a gift of sixpence, he bought a second-hand Greek grammar from a local book shop. Pages of it, fastened over the washstand in his bedroom, helped him study accidence and syntax as he did his morning toilet, so that in time he was fluent enough to follow the daily lesson in church, with the Greek Testament hidden between the covers of his Bible. Later he found a Hebrew edition of the *Book of Kings* in his father's library, with an English glossary, and mastered it with the same determination. This precocious fluency in languages stayed with him all his life, enabling him to learn Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Marathi, Hindi, Russian and Japanese—not perfectly, but well enough for pleasure and profit.

The education that poets give themselves is often the best, and Edwin's first experience of formal schooling was not happy. The school, at Bexley Heath in Kent, was kept by a man named Henry Edwards, who had been in the Royal Navy and had learned his ideas of discipline there. His forte was mathematics, while the classics appealed to him but little; in reaction his pupil acquired a strong love of languages, but never more than average skill in mathematics. The food consisted of such delicacies as salt pork and half-baked potatoes, black bread and rancid suet pudding, and it was a strict rule that every boy should show a clean plate at the end of each meal. Arnold stood the diet as long as he could, and then came to an agreement with his friends to do their Greek and Latin exercises in return for eating the more nauseous of the meals. This regime lasted until 1845, when Edwin was sent to the King's School at Rochester, an ancient establishment founded by Henry VIII and ruled by the scholarly and cultivated Rev. Robert Whiston. Under this gentler discipline his talents flourished. He was the head boy of the sixth form, and at the Midsummer examination of 1849 he won a scholarship of sixty pounds, a first prize for Latin prose, and first prize for an English essay. One of his earliest poems, entitled "Harvester," earned him

the praise of his masters and gave hints of his future success as an author.

Mrs. Arnold devoutly saw to it that her children were brought up in the Established Church, and although Edwin became something of a backslider in later years, he never ceased to know and love the familiar phrases of the Bible and Prayer Book. His mother even hoped that he would enter Holy Orders, not suspecting that the day would come when her son would be known as the interpreter of religions the very names of which were strange to Kentish townsfolk of the time. As early as his school days in Rochester he showed dissatisfaction with a faith that was adequate for his parents but seemed too narrow for him. A friend who shared his restlessness was Frederick Cairns Hubbard, and when Hubbard died some years later Arnold wrote a poem to his memory recalling the long and earnest discussions which the two boys had together, "With a smile at the saintly heaven, And a sigh for the priestly hell." Even at this age, Arnold was looking for a religion more universal and embracing than Christian orthodoxy. There was, of course, nothing unusual in such a concern, which was quite as normal as an interest in Freud would be today.

After five years at Rochester, Arnold went in the winter of 1850-1851 to London for a year at King's College. His closest friend there was Frederic William Farrar, later Dean of Canterbury and a celebrated broad churchman. Farrar and Arnold were amicable rivals for awards and prizes, and by the poet's admission, Farrar beat him in most of these competitions except, oddly enough, in one or two theological contests. Together with another friend, Edward Dicey, the boys started a monthly serial, *The King's College Magazine*, and some of their earliest literary efforts lie buried in its forgotten pages. Their Latin class was conducted at times by F. D. Maurice, the theologian. He was a competent classicist, but the students found his saintly and ascetic appearance strangely incongruous with the frankness of Catullus and Juvenal, so that on one occasion, as their eminent teacher was reading Horace's lines, "*Quis multa gracilis puer te in rosa,*" describing

the fickle Pyrrha and her unhappy lover, they burst into disrespectful laughter. Farrar rose to rebuke the class for its rudeness, and Arnold later claimed that his admiration for Farrar began at that moment.

Arnold's ties with these men continued in later years. Dicey became his colleague on the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, and with Farrar, who remained his closest friend, he kept up a correspondence in classical Greek. Later, when Farrar became headmaster of Marlborough College, Arnold sent his son Julian there. Arnold was never so close to Maurice as Farrar was, yet the same breadth of spirit which Farrar learned from his teacher is to be found in Arnold also, and in double measure. Maurice and Farrar are numbered among the broad churchmen, but Arnold was the broadest of the three, for he took as his church nothing less than the whole of humanity.

After school came the university. The fortunes of Arnold's father rose and fell with those of British agriculture, so that Edwin had to choose between spending his patrimony on an education or saving it to make a start in life later on. He chose without hesitation to spend it and accordingly matriculated at the age of nineteen at University College, Oxford, where his rooms were those formerly occupied by Shelley. Arnold was a good student, but he broke no records and won only third place in the classics. His tutor in classics was Dr. Arthur P. Stanley, who later became Dean of Westminster and a leader of the broad church party; his influence did much to encourage the already liberal bent of Arnold's mind. In history his tutor was Goldwin Smith, no less of a liberal in his own field, and a man whose broad historical outlook enabled him to rise above the parochial interests of his own country, even to the point of arguing that the logic of economics and politics demanded the union of Canada with the United States. After the Civil War he left Oxford to become a professor, first at Cornell and then at the University of Toronto, where Arnold visited him in 1889.



Among the undergraduates one of his best friends was Henry Kingsley, brother of Charles Kingsley, who later became a novelist but who at that time was interested mainly in sports. Arnold once wagered him that he could not "run a mile, row a mile and trot a mile" in fifteen minutes—and lost the wager. Together the two friends founded the Fez Club, an eccentric organization of fifty members, vowed to misogyny, celibacy, and a general program of "keeping women in their place." Meetings were held at Dickens's Coffee House in the Turl, at which the brethren wore fezzes and smoked Oriental tobacco in Oriental pipes. A few persons took the club seriously enough to be alarmed at what they imagined to be a society for the propagation of free love, and some Masons professed to see in it a travesty of their own fraternity; actually the whole business was merely an overflow of youthful high spirits. Arnold maintained his celibate principles only to the age of twenty-two, and Kingsley married a few years later.

At Oxford Arnold first definitely appeared in the role of a poet. Since only a few of his youthful poems are dated, it is hard to tell which are the earliest, but certainly the first to attract attention was *The Feast of Belshazzar*, which won the Newdigate prize in 1852. The Newdigate is the best known of all the Oxford competitions, made famous by the many men of letters who have won it and by the even more distinguished list of men, from Shelley to Bridges, who have failed to do so. In accordance with custom, Arnold read his poem publicly in the Sheldonian Theatre on June 23, 1852. His opening lines struck the wrong note: they were delivered at such a pitch of high-flown magniloquence that the audience burst into an uproar and would not be stilled until the young poet stopped and began again in a more modest key. By the time he had finished, however, he had made his point, and the sound that greeted him then was honest applause. Among his hearers was Benjamin Disraeli, already known as a novelist and just entering politics, who, on meeting him afterwards, shook him warmly by the hand and prophesied a brilliant future for him.

*The Feast of Belshazzar* was the first poem to give Arnold a reputation. Generally, academic rhymes would pass unnoticed, even Newdigate poems making little stir beyond the precincts of Oxford, but this one was above the average and attracted more attention than any prize poem since Heber's *Jerusalem*. Oxford in the mid-nineteenth century was dominated by clergymen, and most Newdigate poems in those decades traditionally included a peroration predicting the triumph of Christianity over its enemies and the ushering in of the Kingdom of Heaven. Heber wrote in this vein, so did Ruskin, so did the winner of 1851, Alfred Hunt. Arnold's poem, though pious enough in spirit, avoided this narrowly dogmatic attitude and hinted at the time when he was to be an apologist for many religions besides Christianity. Even the opening lines are prophetic:

Not by one portal, or one path alone  
God's holy messages to men are known.

These words might have been the motto of Arnold's entire life.

The theme of the poem—which was not Arnold's choosing—was the impious feast of Belshazzar at Babylon, when the divine hand appeared and wrote on the wall the words dooming the king and his dominions. As one might expect of so young a poet, Arnold's language was clearly imitative. The picture of Belshazzar seated on his throne was taken from the picture of Satan in the second book of *Paradise Lost*, and the lamps that gleamed in the marble palace illuminated a similar scene in Keats's *Lamia*. The strongest indebtedness, however, was to the Newdigate poem of the previous year, by Alfred William Hunt, entitled *Nineveh*. If Arnold as a freshman did not hear Hunt recite this poem in the Sheldonian in 1851, at least he studied it carefully, for the poems are much alike. They use similar language to evoke the barbaric splendor of ancient Assyria, and both describe the winged bulls and lions that guarded the doors of the royal palace of Nineveh. The subject was very much in the public eye at the time. We are so familiar

with these sculptures that we forget how new they were in 1852; in fact they were installed in the British Museum only in February of that year, and if Arnold did not visit them in the museum itself, he must have seen their pictures, either in the press or in Sir Henry Layard's book, *Nineveh and Its Remains*. Nor were Hunt and Arnold the only ones whose imaginations were fired by these monuments of a buried civilization: a greater poet than either, Rossetti, was present when workmen unpacked some of Layard's finds in the British Museum and was moved to write "The Burden of Nineveh." For Arnold, the bulls marked the start of a lifelong interest in Near Eastern archeology, an interest that was to bear much fruit later on.

Arnold's first complete book of verse, *Poems Narrative and Lyrical*, appeared in 1853, dedicated to the dowager Countess Waldegrave, who had befriended him. It included "The Feast of Belshazzar," some verse written on a holiday jaunt to Italy in the summer of 1852, and other miscellaneous pieces. This collection shows Arnold experimenting with the styles of all the principal poets of the day, like a buyer in a haberdashery shop trying on hats. For instance, "Sir Evelyng" reads like a clever parody of "Christabel," with its medieval setting, its supernatural theme and its four-stressed lines. "The Island of Trees" is Byronic, and its hero, the brooding young Hypolito, is a combination of Juan, Harold, and Manfred, although rather duller and more virtuous than his prototypes. "The Falcon Feast" is taken from the *Decameron*. "Alley" is a sentimental tale of an Irish peasant who perjures himself to save the husband of the woman he loves. The story is a close paraphrase of one told by Mrs. S. C. Hall in one of her many books of travel, but in its general mood and style it seems inspired by the rustic idylls of Wordsworth. The master from whom Arnold learned the most, however, was Keats, whose influence, which was apparent as early as "The Feast of Belshazzar," now appears full-blown in "Violetta," an Italian tale of a woman who innocently and in disguise spends a night in bed with the man who later becomes her husband. The story is slight enough, though to the reviewers

of those far-off days it seemed rather daring. Lines like these were obviously imitated from "The Eve of Saint Agnes":

They sleep! The spangled night is melting off,  
And still they sleep; the holy moon looks in,  
In at the painted window-panes, and flings  
Ruby, blue, purple, emerald, amethyst,  
Crystal and orange colours on their limbs,  
And round her face a glory of white light,  
As one who sins not; on the tapestries  
Gold lights are flashing like the wings of angels,  
Bringing these two hearts to be single-hearted.

Immature though it is, this passage illustrates in embryo most of the features of Arnold's later style. He was fascinated by color, which filled some deep need in his personality. He loved jeweled scenes, jeweled language, and jewels themselves. For example, in later life he once bought a handful of cut stones in a Sinhalese bazaar; they were flawed and worthless, but Arnold cared nothing for that—it was the color which he admired. He not only kept and treasured them, but set them in the furniture, the banisters, and even the handles of his hair-brush. A visitor who left an umbrella might return the next day to find it inlaid with garnets and topazes. It was in this way that he wrote his poetry: by taking the property of other writers and inlaying it with his own poetic jewelry. Nor did he care too much if some of his gems were flawed. Thus if we compare Arnold's lines with Keats's—the comparison is unfair but instructive—we see how much looser was his construction and how vaguely he visualized the scene. Keats applies his colors like a painter: red on the breast, rose on the hands, amethyst on the cross, and so on. Arnold throws his colors on all at once, running them together indiscriminately in one line, and giving the impression, as one reviewer complained, of a mashed rainbow. He forgot, moreover, that purple and amethyst are the same color, and that crystal, which is transparent, cannot properly be said to have any color. Keats compares Madeline to a saint with a halo, an



image made concrete by countless religious paintings, while Arnold compares his heroine vaguely and negatively to "one who sins not." The difference is between pictorial exactness and mere sentimentality.

Though the reviews of *Poems Narrative and Lyrical* were patronizing in tone, Arnold could not complain that the critics ignored him. The *Athenaeum* gave him a short notice, and *Blackwood's* reviewed him in the old-fashioned style of heavy-handed criticism for which it was famous. Fortunately, Arnold was not dismayed by the taunts of a Scottish reviewer. The *Spectator* was the most charitable and the most discerning. After praising Arnold's facility, vigor, and "power of justly appreciating the true nature of the distant past," the review closed with this warning:

But unless Mr. Arnold exercise great care, his very merits may prevent his advance. His fluency and facility, coupled with his pervading grace, may lose him in conventionalism. Traces of this are visible in the present volume. His subjects are too often common. . . . The poet who would really fix the public attention must leave the exhausted past, and draw his subjects from matters of present import, and therefore of interest and novelty.

When Arnold found himself in later years, he was able to choose themes of interest and novelty, but the warning against mere fluency went unheeded.

It must have been in the year 1852 or 1853 that Arnold wrote one of the best of his undergraduate poems, called "A Ma Future," a tender and sincere lyric addressed to "that not impossible she," his yet unknown wife. This poem had an interesting history. It was first published in 1856 in *Giselda and Other Poems*, a book which attracted little attention and was soon forgotten. Twenty years later, Blanchard Jerrold, in editing the literary remains of the Irish priest, Francis Mahoney, found this poem among his papers and published it in *The Final Reliques of Father Prout*. A facsimile in Mahoney's hand was reproduced as the frontis-

piece. A highly amusing newspaper controversy arose contesting its authorship, made more ridiculous in that Mahoney's friend, John Sheehan, (known to the world of letters as "the Irish whiskey-drinker"), insisted that the poem was by "Father Prout," even though the evidence of *Griselda* was incontrovertible. The explanation was, of course, that Mahoney had copied Arnold's verses because he liked them, and with no idea of claiming them as his own. There is poetic justice in the affair, for one of Mahoney's favorite pranks was to make translations into French or Italian of poems by Moore and others, and then to publish the translation as the original from which the English poem was plagiarized. One can imagine the irrespressible jester chuckling in his grave at Jerrold's discomfiture.<sup>1</sup>

Arnold did not have to wait long for his "future." She was Katharine Elizabeth Biddulph, the sister of Tregenna Biddulph, an undergraduate friend. Biddulph had induced his sister to come to Oxford for Commemoration Day, with the understanding that Arnold's mother was to act as chaperon. The two women were present in the Sheldonian Theatre when the young poet read "The Feast of Belshazzar." Soon afterwards he visited the Biddulphs in their Devon home, and from the friendship thus begun grew the love that ripened into marriage. Several poems record the progress of the courtship, and the marriage was celebrated at Taunton on January 4, 1855. For ten years, as far as love can, Katharine's love inspired his best efforts.

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1 The source of this story is Alfred H. Miles, *The Poets and Poetry of the Century* (London: Hutchinson, 1892), 5 vols., Vol. V, 532. The article on Arnold, in which the incident is told, is written by Mackenzie Bell, who says that the letter exposing the mistake appeared in the *Athenaeum*, and was written by a leading critic of that journal. A careful search of the appropriate number of the *Athenaeum* fails to show any signs of a controversy, and does not even indicate that the magazine ever reviewed the book. It may be that Bell's memory failed him, and that the controversy took place in one of the daily papers. The writer would gratefully welcome any hints as to how to find these letters. The story seems plausible enough, and the poem is unmistakably to be found in Jerrold's book.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SCHOOLMASTER: 1855-1860

Young poets must eat, even when they are twenty-two and just married; so Arnold was happy on receiving his degree to find a post as a master in the English division of the ancient King Edward VI School in Birmingham. The school was under the headmastership of Edward Hamilton Gifford, later Archdeacon of London, and was staffed by some fifteen or twenty young Oxford and Cambridge graduates. The building, located on New Street, was a massive Gothic structure with stained glass windows, designed by Barry, the architect of the Houses of Parliament. All we know of this period in Arnold's life comes from an essay entitled "The Two Bridges," which he wrote after his memories had been transformed by the perspective of forty years. He was a good teacher who knew how to identify himself with his students, who tried conscientiously to make the lessons interesting, and who treated the boys with fairness and respect. On one occasion he solemnly and dramatically did away with the stick as an instrument of discipline. It was a hot afternoon, and the class was languidly studying Cicero, when some disturbance caught Arnold's attention. Though he did not usually believe in corporal punishment, a ferule lay on every master's desk ready for use, and the weather had made him irritable enough to use it. Picking up the stick, he gave a quick cut on the back of the boy who seemed guilty. The boy, squirming, protested that his neighbor had been at fault, not he, and inquiry proved him right. Feeling that he himself was largely to blame, Arnold handed his victim the stick and told him to return the blow as hard as he could. The boy held back a moment, and then, on being urged, gave Arnold a hard lash across the shoulders. Arnold had never been flogged in his life, or taken a blow without promptly returning it, and the cut of the stick was a revelation to him. Thanking the boy as

best he could, he ordered him to break the ferule across his knees and throw it out the window.

In 1856 Arnold returned to Oxford long enough to take his Master's degree, and then spent the following year as a wanderer, looking for congenial work and writing what he pleased. One of his poems is dated from Hastings, January 1857, and another from Swanscombe, June 1857. Some of his work appeared in *Once a Week*, and still more in *The Press*. On May 14 of the same year his first son was born, Edwin Lester Linden Arnold. Lester, as he was called, was named for General John Lester, Katharine's brother-in-law, while the name Linden came from the Biddulph family. His career bore a striking similarity to that of his father. Like the elder Edwin, he became an author, wrote books of travel, settled for a time in India (as a coffee-planter) and then returned to England to become a novelist. His best known work was *The Wonderful Adventures of Phra the Phoenician*.

Arnold's next book appeared in 1856. This was *Griselda and Other Poems*, published by Bogue of London, and dedicated to his father. Poetically it marks a real advance over *Poems Narrative and Lyrical*; the style is no longer experimental or derivative, but has a sureness of touch both in technique and conception that mark the author's maturation in his craft. The title-piece is a blank verse dramatization of the familiar story of patient Griselda, made famous by Boccaccio, Petrarch and Chaucer. As with all Arnold's plays, the dead hand of Shakespeare lies so heavily on it that it would be unactable today.

The second half of the book is devoted to shorter poems, lyrical, narrative and heroic. First among these is the "Congratulatory Address," read in the Sheldonian Theatre on the installation of the Earl of Derby as Chancellor of Oxford. It is cast in the academic manner and neoclassical couplets that characterize Arnold's earliest verse. Far more mature is "The Lost Pleiad, A Story of the Stars," written as a monody spoken by the star Merope, bewailing the sin that caused her to lose her light. In



Apollodorus, Merope's sin was intercourse with a human, but in Arnold's Christianized version she is punished by God for turning a deaf ear to the prayer of a woman in distress. The alteration, made to suit Victorian taste, is characteristic of Arnold. The poem is in blank verse with a stanzaic introduction; its most effective feature is a burden that keeps recurring with slight variations:

Ai! Ai! light bearers, I am Merope,  
Merope, heaven-exiled Merope,  
Who stood between God's lowest and God's love.

If "Violetta" is inspired by Keats, "Merope" shows Arnold at his most Tennysonian, for the classical theme, the moral purpose, the flowing blank verse and the refrain are all devices that Tennyson had used effectively in "Oenone" and like poems. For forty years, Tennyson remained probably the most important single influence on Arnold's style. The other poems are very uneven. Some are love poetry; others are humorous or occasional verses. The collection closes with half a dozen pieces inspired by the Crimean War, of which the best is dedicated to Florence Nightingale as "true victress in this strife."

This collection, published on the eve of his departure for India, gives an idea of the sort of poet Arnold would have made if his attention had not been diverted to Oriental themes. They are not poems of the first order, but they are readable, as was everything that Arnold wrote. Still, there is no reason to suppose that he would have risen much above this level of achievement, or have won any reputation on the strength of such work. Indeed, the volume passed unnoticed, and the critical journals gave it no such reviews as greeted *Poems Narrative and Lyrical*. However, many of these verses later became known when they were printed in collections of Arnold's poems made after 1880, when his reputation was safe. Apparently he rated them more highly than he did his undergraduate efforts, most of which, with the exception of "Belshazzar," he suffered to be forgotten.

One piece, written at this time and published separately as a pamphlet in 1857, was "The Wreck of the Northern Belle," a poem interesting because it connects Arnold with the novelist, Charles Reade. On January 7 of that year an American ship, the *Northern Belle*, sailing from New York to London, was wrecked near Broadstairs. A lifeboat, the *Victory*, put out to save the men, and in the attempt nine of the English crew lost their lives. Later a second boat reached the wreck and rescued the Americans. Charles Reade was one of those who wished to raise a fund for the families of the crew of the *Victory*. He tried to solicit Arnold for a pound, but the poet, who had a wife and family of his own to support, offered instead to write a ballad about the wreck. While Reade waited, Arnold dashed off his verses at top speed and without revision—as anyone can guess by reading them. The ink was scarcely dry when Reade hurried the manuscript around to a local printer and had it published as a pamphlet, to be sold at a shilling a copy. As a poem it was only doggerel, but it did its work well enough.

We do not know when Arnold and Reade first met, though they could have made each other's acquaintance while Reade was bursar of Magdalen and Arnold an undergraduate. In any event, the affair of the *Northern Belle* was not the last time that Arnold was able to be of service to his friend. In 1866 the first installment of *Griffith Gaunt* appeared in serial form, arousing a storm of censure, especially in the United States, where charges of immorality and indecency were hurled at it. The *Toronto Globe* and the *London Review* also attacked it in the same vein. Reade, being a fighter, sued for damages, and went around to various literary friends for testimony on his behalf. Wilkie Collins responded gladly, while Dickens refused to help. Arnold gave his unsolicited support in a cordial and flattering review in the *Telegraph* of December 26, 1866, and gladly agreed to testify for Reade in court. His letter to Reade on this occasion speaks of *Griffith Gaunt* as an "exquisite, and most healthy and vigorous story." The incident illustrates Arnold's generosity, his vigorous

way of defending what he felt to be a just cause, and his essential healthy-mindedness. Reade won his suit, by the way, and was awarded damages of six cents.

In 1857 came the real turning point in Arnold's life: the India Office offered the young teacher, then only twenty-five, the principalship of the government college at Poona, in the Bombay Presidency. The post was secured through the influence of General John Lester, his relative by marriage and a prominent Anglo-Indian. The prospect was exciting, even dangerous, for India was in open revolt from Delhi to the sea, and the rebellion threatened to engulf the whole peninsula. Among those who fell was Arnold's old friend from Rochester, Frederick Cairns Hubbard. Hubbard had gone to Cambridge and matriculated at Caius College; later he took a post as teacher of mathematics, first at Calicut and later at the College at Agra. During these years Arnold kept in touch with him by letter, and even wrote two poems addressed to him. Perhaps this correspondence first turned his thoughts to a career in India. After Arnold's appointment to Poona, Hubbard made plans to join him on the same faculty and to spend many years together in friendly cooperation, but on the eve of Arnold's departure for India word came that the mutiny had broken out and that Hubbard was one of the first to die. He had refused to take refuge in the Fort with the rest of the civilians, but had continued boldly at his work, grading his papers with a loaded revolver at his side. On July 5, 1857, he volunteered for an expedition to fight the mutineers at Fathepur Sikhri, and set out on horseback to join the rest. While taking a short cut from his bungalow to the Fort a police officer, presumably loyal, suddenly turned on him and shot him down. The body lay where it fell for three days until it was picked up by patrols from the fort.

With this omen to cheer them, Arnold, Katharine and little Lester sailed for India. Their ship was the *Pottinger*, an old paddle wheeler with three hundred soldiers on board. Target practice was a daily occupation, and at Cairo they met the first wounded men returning home. The same atmosphere of urgency

surrounded their landing at Bombay, where Arnold was ordered to his post within an hour of his arrival. That night they journeyed up the Western Ghats—the railroad line had just been laid—passing one village after another in the dark but seeing nothing of the country until they reached Poona at sunrise.

Arnold entered upon his duties December 7, 1857, and spent the two weeks before the Christmas vacation familiarizing himself with the school. There was much to be done. Deccan College had been founded in 1851 by a merger of the old Poona Sanskrit College and the Poona English School, but the union was only nominal. The Sanskrit teachers, most of whom could speak no English, taught their subject after the time-honored rote method, and admitted only Brahmins to their classes, despite the explicit rules of the college, which was open to all castes and creeds. Discipline was at a low ebb, absenteeism was common, and there were rumors of misappropriation of funds. The teachers were ill-paid, and there were not enough textbooks to go round. Enrollment was low: there were thirty-three students in the College School and forty-one in the Normal School. The building that housed the college was an old royal palace called Vishrambagh, located in the heart of town; Arnold thought it most picturesque, but the more prosaic government inspector found it inconvenient, noisy, crowded and ill-lit. Indeed, there was talk of moving the whole establishment to Ahmednagar, or else of sending the students to Elphinstone College at Bombay. A sweeping survey of the entire college had been made in 1855-1856 by the Government Examiner, a Captain Cowper, who had submitted a list of a score or more recommendations for reform. The principal at the time had protested violently against the inquiry, so Arnold was imported to take his place and to carry out Cowper's suggestions.

India is a heartbreaking place for reformers, but Arnold tackled his job conscientiously. The Sanskrit *shastris*, after terrific opposition to the liberalized program, were transferred to clerical jobs in government offices, with a reduction in salary. For the native teachers who stayed, there was a general increase in pay. Absences



of students were checked daily, and a system of demerits instituted. Cheating on examinations remained a problem, especially as some students were able to bribe the printer to give them advance copies, but this problem was met by printing two sets of examinations, a decoy set in Poona and a real set in Bombay. A new code of rules was drawn up, some of which read strangely by Western standards. The first on the list was as follows:

Previous to entering the class the boys must deposit their shoes without the room and must, on no account, take off their turbans while in school.

Arnold was not the only new member of the staff. In 1859 he was joined by Martin Haug, the German Orientalist, who came to take over the department of Sanskrit studies and to do research among the Parsis in the Zend language and literature. Arnold tells how Haug once rode with him at daybreak to a spot at the water's edge where a Parsi priest was reciting a prayer in Zend. Haug asked the man if he knew what he was saying. The priest answered that the words were sacred and traditional, but that he had no idea of their meaning. Thereupon Haug repeated the whole invocation slowly and correctly, with a translation, much to the astonishment of the priest.

In addition to strengthening the staff, Arnold reformed the curriculum. The time devoted to Sanskrit was reduced, and more attention was given to English literature. The reading list for the senior and junior classes was strengthened by the addition of a few English classics, such as *Paradise Lost*, Butler's *Analogy*, Cowper's *Task*, Johnson's *Essays*, and Hume's *History of England*. Since textbooks were few, the class had to write out the entire text of *Comus* verbatim. Arnold had great faith in the natural sciences as a means of Westernizing the Indian mind, and introduced several courses in them. He taught some of the senior classes himself; in his first annual report he speaks of delivering lectures on respiration, digestion, optics and Longfellow's *Evangeline*.



Arnold's reports to his superiors and to his successor show that the man who later became famous as a lover of India was sometimes heartily exasperated with its inhabitants. His reaction is not surprising. There is probably no British administrator in the Orient, however charitable or understanding he may be, who has not found himself at some time out of patience with the people he governs; the cultural gap is too vast and the possibilities for misunderstanding are too great for it to be otherwise. Arnold felt that the average Indian, despite his industry in memorizing lessons, had no real originality and no love of learning as such. Most of his students were poor Brahmins who wanted an education as a preparation for jobs as petty clerks or school teachers, and many of them were on scholarships. Arnold regarded these boys as respectable mendicants, interested in education only for its cash value, and he feared that to put a Western education in their hands would be to create a class of discontented and impoverished intellectuals who would in time be powerful agents of unrest. As a remedy he made several suggestions, one being to increase the proportion of paying students, on the theory that the Indian placed no great value on something that cost him nothing. In this he was largely successful. His other proposals were more ambitious: he hoped, in the first place, to attract into the schools more students from those classes which by virtue of their wealth, social position and political power were already at the head of their communities; in the second place, he hoped that the government would open more responsible and better-paid positions to Indians, so that a Brahmin might see his education as a training for something better than a ten-rupee-a-month clerkship. "Give me masters and students of higher position," he begged, "or elevate those I have to the needful level of a scholar's independence." Arnold believed in education, but it was education for leaders that he wanted, not for the masses.

Despite these problems, Arnold enjoyed himself immensely, for he was a born teacher, enthusiastic, understanding and fond of his students. He distinguished himself, for example, by his wise

tolerance in matters of religion. He set to work studying Marathi and Sanskrit, and soon learned to acknowledge the beauty of the Sanskrit classics and the sublimity of Hinduism. He urged his successor to study Sanskrit as he had done, and felt only contempt for the missionaries who could dismiss such treasures as the work of the devil. Furthermore, he believed deeply in the importance of what he was doing. He had no use for the old school of administrators and army officers who could see no point in "educating niggers," for he knew that he was not only educating the youth of Poona, but also laying the foundations of the Indian nation that would some day be born. In his final report he wrote,

It is certain that we shall not always retain India, and equally certain that our business is to deal with her as honest tenants, who will render back their house in fair order to the great Landlord; . . . The time may come when Madagascar and the Red Sea ports will send the tricolor to Colaba, and a Russian fleet from the Amoor blockade the Hooghly; and we should have the country in that day with us or against us, in proportion as we have utilized the intervening time. A likelier political issue, although further removed, is when, weary of a burden she can neither support nor repudiate, England will imitate Rome under Hadrian, and, surrendering her trans-Euphratic appanage, mark the access of that weariness which precedes the decline of Empires. If India, no longer nursed, can in such a day stand alone, we shall have done our duty; if she relapses into Hindoo regimes and traditions, or merges helplessly into the undistinguished mass of Russian rule, we shall bear the blame of extinguishing the torch of civilization in the last round of the *λαμπαδηφορία*.

Remember that Arnold was writing just after the Mutiny, at a time when it must have seemed to most Englishmen that the last sparks of Indian resistance had been crushed forever. He had learned much in India to be able to write those words, for there cannot have been many Englishmen in 1860 capable of so much generosity and foresight.

Fortunately, the rebellion was confined to the lands north of the Narbada and did not infect the Bombay Presidency, although individual Marathis were prominent among the rebel leaders. Still, the times were tense, and discontent was widespread even in Poona, where, if the situation had been right, a spark could have set the country ablaze. All Europeans were armed, and even Katharine had regular target practice in the garden. Arnold did the same and kept a loaded revolver beside his plate at mealtimes until he felt sufficiently sure of his students and neighbors to forego this precaution. Such measures were justified, for one morning on arriving at the college he found an unauthorized notice posted on the gate, written in Marathi. He ordered it removed and translated; it proved to be an offer of several thousand rupees—the accounts do not agree as to the sum—for the head of the principal. Feeling that it would be a mistake to treat the threat seriously, he had the document read to the assembled students, then followed it with a little speech, saying that he hoped they would find him more useful alive than dead. Thanks to his coolness, the incident passed off without further trouble. Despite these provocations, he refused to take the precautions which the British authorities thought wise. The police wanted to place two or three native agents in the school to report on any rebellious students, but Arnold refused permission, saying that his job was to teach his students, not to spy on them. The matter was laid before Lord Elphinstone, Governor of the Bombay Presidency, who supported Arnold on the condition that he be personally answerable for the good behavior of his pupils.

The war came to an end at last, and in November, 1858, with the land restored to order and outward content, the crown assumed the functions of government which until then had been in the hands of the East India Company. The new Indian empire came into being. A banquet was given by Lord Elphinstone at Kirkee, near Poona, at which the new order was proclaimed and the Queen's health drunk, although many of those present, who had grown gray in the company's service, received the news with

a sadness appropriate to the close of a brilliant and historic era. While the Sahibs celebrated within, on the *maidan* outside some eight hundred Indian troops who had remained true to their salt had their own celebration. A collection of two to three thousand rupees had been gathered to make an entertainment for them, and Arnold was deputed to ask the native officers what the men would like best. "A nautch dance," was the answer. Accordingly, tents were erected, and dancers hired at great expense from the cities round; the temperate soldiers spent the night quietly smoking, chewing betel-nut, and watching the performers.

The staff of Deccan College felt that the new reign should be marked by some especial demonstration of loyalty; so Arnold volunteered to provide a display for the occasion. Taking the largest tablecloth in his bungalow and laying it out on the floor, he painted on it a full-sized portrait of the Empress, copied from an illustration that he found somewhere around the house. The colors were as vivid as paint could make them, and a border of red and white roses completed the gaudy effect. This crude but sincere work was taken to the college and stretched across a frame so that it could be lit from behind by oil lamps. When night came Arnold rode down to the school to see how his masterpiece looked after dark; he found the streets so crowded with shouting, admiring people that he could hardly reach the spot. Mrs. Arnold, no doubt, was less enthusiastic, for it took the *dhobi* several weeks to wash out the last tints of the picture.

Arnold records other incidents from these years in Poona: the ordinary daily routine, minor collisions with the people of the town, and the comic or serio-comic accidents of Indian life. Once his horse accidentally knocked down an aged Hindu woman on her way to a temple with an offering. Distressed, he leaped down to help her, and finding her uninjured but faint, seized some *lotas*, or water jars, from some Brahmin women who chanced to be passing, and gave water to the victim, who recovered quickly. The next day he was waited on by an angry deputation demanding recompense, not for the injury, but for having contaminated



by his touch the *lotas* of Brahmins. The Principal-sahib was obliged to buy a new set in order to pacify them.

Another day, while recovering from an attack of fever contracted during a shooting expedition in the neighborhood of Poona, he lay weakly on a couch by an open window which gave onto a verandah. A beggar found him there and began to ask for alms with a persistent and monotonous singsong that could not be stopped. In his feverish annoyance, Arnold reached for the nearest thing at hand to throw at his tormentor—a ripe melon. The fruit found its mark and Arnold found himself defendant in an action for assault and battery. The magistrate, with scrupulous British impartiality, judged him guilty, fined him ten rupees, and invited him to dinner that evening.

Some of the happiest days in India were spent on hunting and camping trips into the hills near Poona; for Arnold had not yet given up the chase, as he later did under the influence of Buddhist ethics. The final chapter of *Wandering Words* describes this outdoor tent life in loving detail: the welcome rest at the end of the day, the evening meals, the busy sounds of the Indian nights, the first glimmerings of dawn, the bustle and excitement of constant travel. Sometimes this life had a spice of danger, as when he and his attendant were charged by a wild boar near Purandhar in the hills south of Poona. Or it might be that his party entered some tiny Deccan village only to find it deserted, the dead and mangled body of a woman lying by a hut, and the paw marks of a tiger impressed in the dust of the street. Or there might befall some really uncomfortable incident, as when he was lost on the road from Poona to Mahabuleshwar and reached his destination so parched with thirst that he could not keep to the saddle of his horse.

These few years in Poona set Arnold's feet on the path which he followed ever after. It was as an editor that he spent most of his days and earned his bread, but it was as an interpreter of the Orient that he was known and read and loved by thousands. He did not visit India again until 1886, but in those intervening

thirty years the memories of Poona and the Deccan continued to inspire one poem after another, and made their author famous. Fortunately for the world of letters he did not stay in India. He might have remained in the relative obscurity of a provincial schoolmaster, or at most a professional orientalist, but the world would not have heard of him, and his own development might have been thwarted. Just as Arnold's mind was immeasurably broadened by leaving England, so it was to be further enlarged by his return. There were many reasons prompting him to go home. The climate of India is debilitating for those unused to the tropics, and results in lowered vitality, loss of ambition, and increasing irritability. For women and children it can be fatal. One tragedy had already struck the Arnold household: his second son, Harold, born in India, had died of cholera. A third child was on the way, and it would be best for it to be born in England. In 1860 Arnold, still a young man with his real career ahead of him, turned his back on India.

### CHAPTER III

## THE EDITOR: 1860-1878

By the summer of 1860 the Arnolds were back in England and had settled down to raising a large family in the accepted Victorian manner. On July 3 of that year their third son, Julian Tregenna Biddulph Arnold, was born at Framfield. Like so many others of the family, he was destined to be a writer. After a varied life that took him to many parts of the world, he came to the United States as a Chatauqua lecturer and now lives in retirement in southern California. The fourth child, Katharine Lilian, was born in October, 1862. As the only daughter, she became her father's closest companion after the death of his second wife. She was twice married and lived in later years in Dover, where she died in 1945, just before the end of the war. Arthur Cyril was born in 1864. True to the family tradition, he also became a globe-trotter, and finally settled in China, where he eventually died of fever.

At first Arnold planned to go back to India, and with this aim in mind, approached Sir Henry Layard for help in securing an Indian inspectorship of education. Before the application could be approved, however, he suddenly and unexpectedly changed his plans. He was vacationing at the time with his wife in Devon, loafing and fishing on the Dart. While he was there, a friend sent him a copy of the *Athenaeum* containing a review of his latest work, *The Book of Good Counsels*, and as he turned over the pages his eye fell on this advertisement:

WANTED, a brilliant and vigorous WRITER on POLITICAL and SOCIAL SUBJECTS. He must be of liberal opinions, and thoroughly versed in the political transactions of the day, Native and Foreign. The occupation is of a highly remunerative character. —Address, stating particulars, and with a sample

of style, to W.H.W., 26, Birchin-Lane, City. No one need apply who is not a thoroughly-tried and experienced member of the Literary Profession.

Arnold took the job, which was to write feature articles for the *Daily Telegraph*. When he first presented himself as an applicant at the newspaper office, the proprietor set him to write two essays, without reference books or other preparation: one on blush roses and the other on steel filings. Arnold turned out the articles as demanded, the one tender with young love and the fragrance of moonlit gardens in springtime, the other filled with the stern notes of modern industry, and so his career was launched.

Arnold was now comfortably settled, with a congenial job, a good income, and a happy family. The paper to which he had linked his fortunes was one of the many which appeared all over England after the repeal of the stamp tax in 1855. Originally it was a four-page sheet called *The Daily Telegraph and Courier*, selling for twopence. At first it did not thrive, and after it had been in publication only three months, the owner, a certain Colonel Sleigh, was so heavily in debt to his printer that he turned the whole business over to him to meet his obligations. The printer, Joseph Moses Levy, was thought in the world of journalism to have made the worst possible of bargains, but as it turned out, the venture flourished. Levy's brother, Lionel Lawson, contributed £1,000 to tide the paper over the first few months, and with this backing Levy began in September of 1855 to sell his paper for one penny, making it the first penny daily in London. By January the circulation had reached 27,000, and a staff of foreign correspondents had been built up. Soon after, the name was shortened to *The Daily Telegraph*, which it still bears.

The new editor was Levy's son, Edward Lawson, afterward Sir Edward Lawson and Baron Burnham. He had served his apprenticeship in his father's shop and knew both the technical and journalistic side of newspaper work. Although he had a university education, received largely at the University of London, and though



he wrote many feature articles for his paper, he did not pretend to be a writer; it was in directing the work of others that his talent principally lay. Around himself Lawson built up a staff of journalists who set about vigorously to pull the paper out of the mire in which Sleigh left it, so that in time their efforts made it possible for the *Daily Telegraph* to boast "the largest circulation in the world." Among them were Thornton Leigh Hunt, son of the essayist, Geoffrey Prowse, the humorist, William Beatty Kingston, a music critic, the dramatic critic Edward Leman Blanchard, William Clement Scott, a critic and miscellaneous author, the novelist James Greenwood, who was the author of some twenty-five or thirty volumes of fiction, William Clark Russell, whose stories dealt largely with the sea, and H. Francis Lester, a minor novelist and relative of Arnold. Among those who are still remembered should be mentioned George Augustus Henry Sala, one of the most colorful journalists of the Victorian era. He joined the *Telegraph* in 1857, and did his most characteristic work in its pages. His style was bombastic, turgid and egocentric, but his articles were interesting and covered an enormous variety of subjects. He was kept so constantly busy covering foreign news that he used to say he was obliged to keep two sets of baggage always packed: one for cold countries and the other for warm. Thus equipped, enjoying "the wages of an ambassador and the treatment of a gentleman," he represented the *Telegraph* at coronations, royal weddings, expositions and battles from one side of the world to the other.

Over this staff, Lawson was the supreme authority. Arnold's task in the early years was to write feature articles. Later he was given the more responsible task of editing the lead articles for tone and policy, a duty which he shared with Thornton Hunt, Alexander Harper and George Hooper. When Hunt died in 1873, Arnold became second in command after Lawson, and in the absence of the proprietor he acted regularly as editor-in-chief. His principal associate was J. M. Lesage, who exercised Arnold's authority at night. Lesage's assistant in the early eighties was E. J. Goodman,

whose task it was to edit the lead articles as Arnold had done before. In 1885 Lawson withdrew from active editorial work to act as managing proprietor and sole director of the paper, while Arnold stepped into his place as editor-in-chief, a post which he held until 1889. In that year, feeling himself shaken by the loss of his second wife, and weary from nearly thirty years of work, during which he had written between seven and ten thousand articles and editorials, he relinquished his regular responsibilities for a time and was made "travelling commissioner" for the paper. This assignment enabled him to travel to America and Japan, sending home frequent dispatches to the *Telegraph* which were published under the title of "By Sea and Land." After 1890 Lawson's eldest son began to assist his father in the control of the paper, and Arnold devoted himself more to lecturing, travel and writing, although he remained head of the editorial staff until illness finally forced him to keep to his house.

The forty years which Arnold spent on the staff of the *Telegraph* span the era which was the highwatermark of Britain's greatness. It was Arnold's fortune and that of his paper to chronicle and in some measure to guide the course of those decades. A history of the *Telegraph* and of its policies would be a history of Victorian England. British journalism is anonymous, and Arnold's writing cannot always be identified in the columns of his paper, but we can be sure that he did not repine at this anonymity. Arnold did not write for fame; he had enough of that. He wrote because he believed in the press, as a spokesman of the otherwise voiceless masses, as an agent for reform, and as a servant of progress.

In addition to sending its own correspondents abroad, it was the policy of the *Telegraph* to finance expeditions by recognized scholars and explorers, both in the interests of science and for the sake of publicity. The first of these ventures was the archeological expedition of George Smith to Mesopotamia. The idea was Arnold's. His interest in the Near East went as far back as his first published work, "The Feast of Belshazzar," and it had been reinforced more recently by a trip to Palestine. On his return, he

frequently visited the archeological collections in the British Museum, where he eventually fell in with Smith, then an assistant in the Assyriology department. The two became friends, and Smith often visited Arnold at his home in Sidcup, bringing with him his photographs of Babylonian tiles marked with cuneiform inscriptions.

In the twenty years since "The Feast of Belshazzar," much had been accomplished by Orientalists. Sir Henry Layard, the pioneer in the field, had left his studies for a political career, but his work in the Euphrates valley was carried on by Colonel (later Sir Henry) Rawlinson, and the materials collected by him began to swell the museums of France and England. It was Rawlinson who helped to decipher the first Assyrian inscriptions, and under his tutelage Smith began his career as an Assyriologist.

Smith's first conspicuous success was to decipher a tablet which contained a reference to an eclipse known to have occurred in the year 763 B.C., thus helping to establish the proper dates of Assyrian records. In 1871 he published his *Annals of Assurbanipal*, with cuneiform texts, transliterations, and translations of the historical documents of that reign. In 1872 he found tablets containing part of a Chaldean account of the Deluge. The translation of this text was read before the newly-formed Society of Biblical Archeology on December 3 of that year, and won world-wide fame for the finder.

While these discoveries were still fresh in the public mind, the proprietors of the *Telegraph* came forward with an offer of one thousand guineas to support further explorations at Nineveh. Smith was to lead the expedition, and in return was to supply the *Telegraph* with dispatches from time to time. Smith accepted the offer at once. It would have been more convenient for him to wait until the next autumn before starting, but the *Telegraph* wanted some dispatches for its money while the scheme was still newsworthy, and so plans were made to start without delay. The months of December and January were busy ones for Arnold, who had to arrange many details. Letters had to be written to the trustees of the British Museum to secure a leave of absence for

Smith, and the trustees in turn had to submit Arnold's request to the government. Gladstone was approached and proved sympathetic. A busy correspondence passed between Arnold and Layard, who, as a trustee of the Museum and a member of the Privy Council, was in a strategic position to help. There were provisions to buy, passports and permits to get from the Turkish government, and a score of other details which Arnold attended to for Smith, whom he regarded as a mere child in matters of travel. The expedition finally got under way on January 20, 1873, and on March 2 reached Nineveh.

Smith thought that his journey was now over, and that nothing remained but to start digging, but he was soon disappointed. Abdi Effendi, the Turkish governor at Mosul, announced that he had orders from Baghdad to allow no one to excavate the ruins in his district, and would not even permit Smith to look at the mounds. The French consul at Mosul could give no help, so on the following day—the 4th or 5th of March—Smith telegraphed to England to know whether a firman from the Sultan had been granted for the expedition. When no help came from London, Smith decided to go to Baghdad and had a raft made for the purpose. The city of the Arabian Nights was reached on the twelfth of the month, and when Smith visited the local governor, he was assured that no orders had been given forbidding him to dig. After spending a few days looking at the ruins of Babylon and other sites near Baghdad, he returned to Mosul armed with letters to the pasha.

On April 4 he presented himself again to Abdi Effendi, who now professed great friendship and offered every assistance. Tools were secured, laborers hired, and soon the real work of excavation was begun at Nimroud, followed in May by further exploration at Nineveh. Difficulties continued to crop up, however, and false charges were laid against Smith's dragoman, so that Smith had to call on Arnold again for help. The situation finally became so intolerable that Arnold was obliged to go to Constantinople himself to make an arrangement with the Turkish government so binding that Mosul officials would be forced to honor it. His diplomacy



finally extracted from the Turks an agreement that Smith might dig when and where he liked, and keep any tablets he could find, but that all gold, silver and jewels were to become the property of the Turkish government—an admirable bargain, for, as it proved, no buried treasure was found, save only a treasure in Assyrian sculpture and cuneiform records.

The most dramatic of these discoveries can only be described as providential. On May 14, while Smith was cleaning and examining the fragments of inscriptions that had been dug up during the day, he found to his excitement and joy that one of them contained seventeen lines of the first column of the Chaldean story of the deluge. When he first published his account of the tablet a year before he had conjectured that about fifteen lines were missing; the second fragment virtually completed the story. Incredible as it may seem, he had crossed parts of two continents in search of a tiny fragment of clay a few inches long, and found it. Unfortunately, the find put an end to the expedition, since from the point of view of the *Telegraph* the trip had been brought to a journalistic, if not a scientific, conclusion. Smith happily announced his find in a telegram to the newspaper, which printed it with certain changes never intended by the sender. In particular, the editors introduced the words “as the season is closing,” implying that the proper season for excavating was drawing to an end. Smith was indignant, but he had no choice except to pack up his tablets and start home. He left Mosul on June 9, 1873. The trip home was as beset with difficulties as the trip out. At Alexandria the customs authorities seized his box of antiquities, despite the Sultan’s firman, which was shown to have been issued with a technical flaw in it invalidating its authority. It finally took the intervention of the British ambassador to release the shipment, so that it did not finally reach England until August of that year. The *Telegraph* had played its part, and thereafter the British Museum continued the work.

Important though Smith’s expedition was, it was eclipsed the following year by a still more spectacular exploit: Henry Stanley’s

fabulous three-year journey from Zanzibar to the mouth of the Congo. This trip, which fixed with certainty the main geographic features of half a continent, settled for all time the vexed problem of the sources of the Nile and the Congo, led to the formation of the Congo Free State, and opened to European exploration a million square miles of central Africa. Sponsored jointly by the *New York Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph*, it had its start in the *Telegraph* office in a conference between Lawson, Stanley and Arnold. The body of David Livingstone had just been brought back to England to be buried in Westminster Abbey, and the thoughts of the whole country were turned to the problems of African exploration, so that journalistically the occasion was ripe for such a venture. Stanley had already made a name for himself in his search for Livingstone in 1871, a trip sponsored by the *Herald*, and was eager to be off again. Since the *Herald* had a prior claim on Stanley's services, Lawson sent a telegram to James Gordon Bennett, the editor, inviting his paper to share with the *Telegraph* the expenses and glory of the venture. The answer was a terse: "Yes. Bennett." Preparations began at once, and a vast assemblage of equipment was gathered. Arnold helped in these plans as he had done for Smith; in particular he was able to recommend two men to accompany Stanley, the only other white men in the party. They were Frank and Edward Pocock, of Lower Upnor in Kent, the sons of the captain of Arnold's yacht.

The party set out from Zanzibar in November of 1874 and struck northeast into the wilderness. In January Edward Pocock came down with a fever and headache which proved to be typhus. He died on the 18th at Chwyu, and was buried the same evening under a spreading acacia, on the bark of which his brother carved a deep cross. Sadly the rest pushed on, reaching Victoria Nyanza on February 27, 1875. Frank Pocock remained on the shores while Stanley set out with a small party to circumnavigate and survey the lake. His purpose was to determine whether Victoria were one body of water, as Speke had maintained, or a connecting body of lakes and swamps, as Burton thought. Also, by locating the outlet, he

expected to settle once and for all the problem of the source of the Nile.

The north shore of the lake formed the dominion of Mtesa, Emperor of Uganda, who had received Speke some years before and who gave Stanley hospitable entertainment. Mtesa was an uncertain convert to Islam, and Stanley found him bewildered in religious matters, but favorably inclined to Christianity, a religion which seemed to promise a counterbalance to the political power of the Moslem Arabs, and which had the practical advantage of not requiring circumcision. Stanley felt that Uganda was ripe for conversion, if only missionaries would come. By good fortune, he met at Mtesa's court a Belgian adventurer in the service of General Gordon, a colonel named Linant de Bellefonds, who had made his way into the country from the north to see whether the land were worth conquering. Through him Stanley was able to send two letters to the *Telegraph*. One of these described the religious situation at the court of the emperor and invited English missionaries to evangelize the country. The other described the discovery of the source of the Nile, and announced that Stanley had found a group of uninhabited Islands in Lake Victoria which he named the Telegraph Islands, after the newspaper. The chief of these was Levy Island, with Bennett Island about twelve miles away.

This letter had an interesting history. Linant carried it north up the Nile and delivered it to Gordon in the Sudan. Three days later the unhappy Belgian was killed in the neighborhood of Gondokoro by the natives. The letters reached the *Telegraph*, and the editor—it is not clear whether this was Arnold or not—surmised from their soiled appearance, and from information given by his Khartoum correspondent, that they had been thrown away in the bush and recovered. As Sir Harry Johnston later told the story, a punitive expedition was sent out to track down the assassins, and when the body of Linant was found rotting in the sun, the letters to Arnold were recovered from one of the boots. As Johnston was Governor of Uganda, and a recognized authority on East Africa, the tale was accepted, passed into popular circulation, appeared

in missionary histories, and even found a place in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Gordon, who was in a position to know the facts, saw this statement in print and wrote a letter to a friend, explicitly stating that Stanley's letters had never fallen into the jungle as described, but had been delivered safely three days before Linant died. The same letter also appeared in the *Telegraph*, but with that portion omitted which seemed to controvert the editor's guess.

However it was that Arnold got the letters, he publicized them well. The call for missionaries met with instant response, and within a year two parties were on their way to Uganda, one proceeding up the Nile and the other going round by Zanzibar. Their work was soon so successful that other missionaries, especially French Catholics, were attracted to the same region. Thanks to their efforts, Mtesa was at last more confused in religion than he had been at first, and regretted the day that he had ever invited white priests into his lands. From this missionary venture date the beginnings of European settlement in Uganda, which resulted in the final assumption of control by the British around the turn of the century.

At the time, however, all these developments still lay in the future. Stanley's first problem was to survey Victoria Nyanza, and when that job was done to head back into Uganda and across the watershed to Lake George. To the north and west of this lake lay mountains which he named in honor of Gordon Bennett, Edward Lawson, and Edwin Arnold.<sup>1</sup> Striking south from Uganda,

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1 The identification of these peaks is uncertain. In the first place, Stanley confused Lake George with the modern Lake Edward; the two are close together and connected by a strait of water. Mt. Bennett was estimated at 12,000 feet and Mt. Edwin Arnold at 9,000, with the coordinates as 30° 25' east longitude, 0° latitude. Modern maps show only water at this point, so it is not clear just what mountain Stanley saw. Sir Harry Johnston thought it was one of the Ruwenzoris, which are to the northeast, and are the only peaks high enough to answer the description. Mount Kabuga, near the northeastern end of Lake George at 6° 14' N, 30° 29' E, is much closer to Stanley's location, but it is not nine thousand feet high, or anything near that figure. Still, explorers often overestimate altitudes. There is a cut of the mountain in *Through the Dark Continent*, and if one may judge by the size of the trees growing on its slopes, it was of modest proportions. However, we have no idea how exact Stanley's drawings were, and to what extent they are products of the imagination of the engraver. In short, Mt. Edwin Arnold is among the missing, a reminder of the fickleness of literary fame.



Stanley and his men reached Ujiji, on Lake Tanganyika, on May 27, 1876. This was familiar territory, for it was here that he had found Livingstone five years before. Several courses presented themselves which he outlined in another letter to Arnold dated August 15, 1876. He could either strike northward to find the source of the Nile, or else head west to the Lualaba and follow it north to determine where it led. At this time, of course, no one knew for certain whether the Lualaba were a tributary of the Nile, as Livingstone believed, or of the Congo, as Stanley suspected. Stanley was eager to settle the matter, partly in order to finish Livingstone's work, and partly because a sense of anger and humiliation at the unfriendly reception accorded the findings of his first expedition made him eager to vindicate himself by some dramatic feat which would silence his enemies for good. He did not head west at once, however, but spent some time sailing around Lake Tanganyika, surveying its shores and locating its outlet. Other letters found their way home by the hands of Arab slave traders, who had a line of communication open from the Congo to Zanzibar, and who exercised a reign of terror over the whole region. These letters were well publicized, both in the *Telegraph* and in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Pocock sent letters too, complaining that he was hungry for English pudding.

The long trip down the Congo is one of the heroic episodes of modern exploration. The party travelled thousands of miles, through hostile and unknown territory, past dangerous falls and rapids, to reach the Atlantic. On June 3, 1877, Frank Pocock, Stanley's only remaining white companion, died when, in a dare-devil mood, and despite the warnings of his men, he tried to shoot the Mussassa falls in a canoe. At this point the Congo flows through a narrow gorge flanked by high walls over which the tributary streams must plunge to reach the river, and one of these streams Stanley named for Arnold.<sup>2</sup>

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2 Stanley's description is as follows:

Halfway to the Zinga Falls from the Massessa, in the middle of the concave cliffs, falls the Edwin Arnold River, in a long cascade-like descent from the

Stanley reached the Atlantic in August, 1877, wearied and prematurely aged, but eager to tell the world of his discoveries. Even before he could return to England, his letters were advocating the creation of a new empire in the Congo. Stanley was an American, but he had been born in Britain and later became a British subject again; he naturally wanted his mother country to take the lead in the development of the country he had opened. To his vast chagrin, the business interests of England dismissed his plans as "quixotic," and would not act. It remained for Leopold of Belgium to take the lead in the creation of the Congo Free State, and at his invitation Stanley later helped to establish stations along the river banks and to open a road around the falls of the lower river as far as Leopoldville.

Stanley had to work fast, for as early as 1880 a Frenchman, Savorgnan de Brazza, encouraged by Stanley's trip, had gone up the Congo and made treaties with the local chiefs which gave France sovereignty over the north bank of the river from Stanley Pool to the mouth of the Ubangi. Thus out of Stanley's voyage three great colonial empires sprang into being: those of France, England and Belgium. His account of the expedition was published in 1878, and bears a dedication to the four men who had helped him most: Bennett, Levy, Lawson and Arnold.

When Stanley returned, he was invited to lecture on his findings at Burlington Hall, under the auspices of the Royal Geographic Society. At the last moment it developed that no map could be found large enough or correct enough to illustrate the lecture. Once again Arnold stepped in to help his friend. Two of the children—Julian and Katharine—were sent to buy four of the largest bed sheets they could find. These were sewn together, laid on the floor

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height of the tableland, with a sheer drop of 300 feet. While it rolls calmly above, this river has a width of 50 yards, and an average depth of 3 feet.

*Through the Dark Continent*, II, 391.

Stanley gave the coordinates as 4° 24' S, 15° 37' E. As so often happened with his nomenclature, the name did not stick, and we do not know what river he intended. Perhaps it was the modern Luala, entering the Congo at c. 15° 13' S, 14° 3' E. Stanley's book has a cut of the falls.

of the Arnold house, and the outlines of Africa traced on them in India ink. Stanley came for lunch, bringing his notes and charts, so that his friends could fill in the outlines of the lakes and rivers he had explored. That evening the map hung behind Stanley in Burlington Hall—the first to show the natural features of Central Africa.

During all these months, Arnold had acted as Stanley's spokesman in England. Through him the letters from Africa passed; it was he who publicized them and who inspired the British public with a sense of the importance of the new discoveries. In 1876, while Stanley was still in Africa, Arnold published, in cooperation with Colonel Grant and Kerry Nichols, a short pamphlet urging the construction of a telegraph line from South Africa to Egypt, to pass via Zambesi, Tanganyika, Uganda and the Nile. Sir Harry Johnston maintained that this proposal anticipated by a decade both his own and Cecil Rhodes's plan for a transcontinental line of communication. To be sure, Arnold's scheme was for a telegraph line, and not a railroad, such as he later envisioned, and the actual phrase "Cape to Cairo" was Johnston's own coinage; nevertheless it seems reasonable to agree with Johnston that the idea of a British Empire from one end of Africa to the other began as a dream of Arnold's. This dream he continued to proclaim in the columns of the *Telegraph* throughout the rest of the century.

In thus supporting a policy of imperialism, the *Telegraph* broke with its earlier policy of supporting Gladstone and his party. The advertisement in the *Athenaeum* in 1861 which brought Arnold his job had called for a writer of liberal views. He accepted the post in all sincerity, for he was then an enthusiastic young liberal, a believer in social reform, a supporter of the *risorgimento* and an enemy of Louis Napoleon. He always remained a liberal on domestic issues, but his imperialist views became apparent almost at once. The first editorial which he wrote was on the British Empire in the East, and soon an Oriental flavor was noticeable in the columns of the paper. The effect of these editorials was to keep the public constantly aware of the magnitude of England's

imperial heritage and the possibility of yet greater growth in years to come. One New Year's day in the seventies he found occasion to present this message to his readers in an especially effective manner. For months in advance he had quietly made arrangements for messages of greeting and good will to be sent to the *Telegraph* from every corner of the earth where the Union Jack flew. Some described the life of remote colonial outposts, or the unfamiliar dishes that had formed the day's meal. Printed side by side the letters were an eloquent testimony to the vastness of the Empire.

The split with Gladstone came in the seventies over the Eastern Question. For years the Turkish empire had been on the wane, and like all decaying organisms, had set up a poisonous infection in the Balkans. Unrest fought with oppression in a dubious battle which forced itself insistently upon the attention of Europe in the Bulgarian massacres of 1875 and 1876. At first the sympathy of Great Britain, aroused by the fiery words of Gladstone, was for the submerged Christian nationalities in the Balkans, but this attitude began to change when Russia emerged, first as the champion of the Balkan Christians and then as their military ally. During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 the role of Russia seemed to be increasingly that of an active and aggressive conqueror, making use of Balkan nationalism to further her own imperial aspirations. With the fall of Adrianople in January, 1878, the Turkish army was incapable of further resistance, while Russia lay within striking distance of Constantinople and the Aegean. British foreign policy has always opposed Russian expansion, especially to the south, and Disraeli, then Prime Minister, saw in this move a threat to British interests in the Mediterranean, interests which had become the more precious with the acquisition of a controlling interest in the Suez Canal in 1875. In his eyes, Russia had to be stopped at all costs, even though it meant becoming the ally of the "unspeakable Turk."

As British policy shifted from neutrality to an increasingly pro-Turkish position, the editorial policy of the *Telegraph* did the same, until the paper became one of the chief props of the Beaconsfield



government. This shift brought Arnold into sharper disagreement with his brother, Arthur, and with his brother-in-law, Francis Channing. It also aroused the wrath of one of Gladstone's hottest supporters, the radical M.P. and journalistic gadfly, Henry Labouchere. Labby, as he was generally called, was a friend of Lionel Lawson, uncle of the proprietor of the *Telegraph*, and he knew that his friend had invested heavily in Turkish bonds—so heavily that it had taken three cabs to carry the securities to the brokers. He also knew that when the uncle died his tidy investment had fallen to the nephew, and he suspected that this windfall explained Edward Lawson's sudden devotion to the Turkish cause. He aired some of these suspicions in his witty and malicious way in his own paper, *Truth*, and for his pains was assaulted bodily outside his club by the outraged proprietor of the *Telegraph*. For a time a duel seemed imminent, but at the last Lawson refused to fight and brought libel charges instead. The suit was a painful one, especially when Labby, who hated all kinds of sham, made some barbed remarks about Jews who change their names. In the end Labouchere was released on his recognizances, and Lawson dropped the matter, but from then on the *Telegraph* never recovered its former love of liberals and their policies.

Arnold was not involved in Lawson's private quarrels, but he did sympathize with his change in policy, and in its support wrote over four hundred consecutive leading articles, "not one of them," he boasted, "so out at the elbows that it had to begin with the definite article." A special correspondent was sent to the Balkans to cover the war for the *Telegraph*, and this mission led Arnold to write another of his many books. The man selected hesitated on the grounds that he knew no Turkish. Arnold, who did not know the language either, offered to teach him, and on his way home that evening stopped at the bookshops in Holywell Street and bought all the grammars he could find. None of them seemed what he wanted, so nothing remained except to compile one himself. Within a week the book was written, printed, bound and delivered to the reporter, who carried it with him to the front. The story sounds

incredible, or at least suspicious, but the feat is the sort of *tour de force* of which a good linguist like Arnold would be capable under pressure. The book was very small—of vest-pocket size—and confined itself to the elements of the language, with several pages of useful sentences, sample letters and the like at the end. For all its brevity, it proved useful enough to go into a second edition.

Once during these tense years it was Arnold's privilege to guide the counsels of the nation through far more august channels than the *Daily Telegraph*. His paper had supported Disraeli manfully at the time of the Berlin Congress, and it was probably in recognition of this support that Arnold was asked by the Prime Minister to draft the foreign relations clause of the Royal speech from the throne before the two houses of Parliament. Julian Arnold still recalls how the request from Disraeli came while his father was at dinner, and how Arnold drafted the message sitting at the dining room table. Unfortunately, it is not clear just when all this took place, or what session of Parliament was involved; moreover, the dry uniformity of such speeches make it hard to pick out Arnold's words among the rest. If we may hazard a guess, the most likely speech is the one made in January, 1878, just before the Congress opened. The crucial paragraphs deal with England's attempt to engineer a peace between Russia and Turkey, and end with a request for appropriations for arms in the event that one side or the other failed to respect England's neutrality. In the context of Disraeli's foreign policy, such a request was clearly a veiled threat of intervention by Britain on the side of Turkey. It was Arnold's support of this policy that prompted Labouchere to call him "the Prince of Jingoos."

Arnold's services to Turkey during the war won him the award of the Imperial Order of the Medjidieh from the Sultan. When the jeweled emblem of the order was presented by the Turkish ambassador—a friend of his—Arnold protested that one in a subordinate position would not receive so high an honor when the proprietor of the paper went unrewarded. With diplomatic tact, the ambassador replied that another medallion was to be given Lawson,

and was, in fact, reposing at the embassy at the moment. Arnold accepted the decoration, and the ambassador hurried back to cable Constantinople for the second appointment.

The *Telegraph* clashed with the Liberals again during the campaign of 1879 when Gladstone, in a series of ringing addresses in Midlothian, assailed Disraeli's entire foreign policy: The Anglo-Turkish convention, the annexation of Cyprus, the Afghan War, the Zulu War, and the campaign in the Transvaal. The Irish question also found the *Telegraph* opposed to Gladstone, for Arnold was a staunch Unionist, and regarded it as unthinkable the "Ulstermen could ever allow themselves to be governed from Dublin and to bear taxation from the less industrious and less educated moiety of the Irish community." The stand of the *Telegraph* on this and similar issues affected Arnold's chances for the laureateship later. Editor and Prime Minister saw eye to eye on most domestic issues, but in foreign affairs Arnold thought Gladstone narrow and uninformed. If he missed being poet laureate through Gladstone's disfavor, there were other compensations that came through the help of Disraeli and the Queen. On January 1, 1877, Disraeli realized one of his dearest dreams when Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India with great pomp at an Imperial Assembly held at Delhi. Among those whose names were on the honors list was Arnold, who thereafter signed himself C.S.I., Companion of the Star of India.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE AUTHOR: 1860-1878

Arnold's career was not simply a series of happy triumphs; indeed, the first severe blow came only a few years after he had joined the staff of the *Telegraph*. In 1864 Katharine died of tuberculosis. Despite his grief, Arnold kept at his work and found courage to finish and see through the press the book he was then writing: the second volume of *The Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration of British India*. The book was dedicated to Katharine, but thereafter he made very little allusion to his first wife, except for one tender poem entitled "She and He." Springing as it does out of the grief of his loss, this little lyric has a pathos and intensity which Arnold did not often achieve; it is one of his best works.

Once *Dalhousie's Administration* was out of the way, Arnold badly needed a rest and change of scene, and so in the winter of 1865 he left with his sister Emma for a tour of Palestine. In later years he wrote that nothing in all his travels had stirred him so deeply, or left such a lasting impression on him, as his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Their route led the travelers by ship to Beirut, then overland through Damascus, Nazareth, Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Of all the sights in Palestine, that which moved him most was the Sea of Galilee, with its sacred associations, and the ruined towns of Capernaum, Bethsaida, Magdala and Tiberias that line its shores. At Cana, where the wedding took place at which Christ worked his first miracle, he picked and pressed a cyclamen blossom which he later gave to his second wife on their wedding day. From there they went on to Nazareth and spent some time in what Arnold called "the spiritual metropolis of the world." Jerusalem was the base of operations for a journey down to the Dead Sea, a trip for which it was necessary to take an escort of Turkish soldiery. The party camped near Jericho, where Arnold won the respect of the Arabs by rebuking his soldiers for tearing down the thorn fence



of an Arab village to make a fire. In gratitude, the villagers arranged a boar hunt for him, and in a few hours of sport secured enough unclean flesh for all the Christians in the camp. Still more excitement developed when a young Arab sheik tried to buy Emma for the price of a string of camels; the offer was kindly and respectfully intended, but Emma refused it nonetheless.

Arnold seldom went anywhere without commemorating the visit in at least one poem, and his trip through Palestine bore fruit years later when he wrote *The Light of the World*, drawing on his own experience for many of the descriptive passages. A more immediate result was a plan to build a small hospital or dispensary in Nazareth in memory of Katharine. With this idea in mind he bought some seven acres of waste land on the presumed site of the synagogue where Jesus first announced his mission "to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind," but nothing came of the scheme. The Turkish government was uncooperative, and Arnold had to call on Sir Henry Layard for the support of the Foreign Office. Permission was finally granted in May, 1865, though not on very favorable terms. Next the Greek and Latin monks quarreled over the project, the sailing vessel which carried the supplies went down at sea, and finally all had to be abandoned.

The next four years were empty ones during which Arnold lived with his truncated family in Kensington, first at Kendall Cottage, Victoria Road, and later at Harcourt Terrace. Finally in 1868, feeling, no doubt, that his children had been in the hands of a governess too long, he married Fanny Maria Adelaide Channing, the daughter of William Henry Channing. William Henry, the nephew of the more famous William Ellery Channing, was a Unitarian minister and a Transcendentalist who had lived for a time at Brook Farm. After several pastorates in the United States, and a short period as the editor of a Socialist newspaper, he went to England in 1854, where he spent most of his life, with the exception of a brief period during the Civil War, when he served as minister of the Unitarian church in Washington. Arnold first knew

Channing as minister of the short-lived Free Christian Church of Notting Hill and presumably found his liberal, nondogmatic and somewhat mystical brand of Christianity congenial. The two men admired each other greatly, and Channing's letters are full of the praises of his son-in-law, whom he describes as "a rare person, of singularly sweet and generous character, a fine genius, a poet in life as well as word."

There is a romantic story that Arnold first met Fanny copying an angel by Perugino in the National Gallery. More prosaically, we know that they met at dinners and parties during the winter of 1867-1868, and that the wedding took place in July. Soon afterwards the family moved to Sidcup in Kent, and the two oldest boys were sent to a private school at Brighton, named "Sibthorpe." Then in 1870, when Julian was ten, he was sent to Marlborough College in Wiltshire, under the headmastership of Arnold's old friend Farrar, and remained there until 1876 or 1877.

From this second marriage two sons were born, the first, William Channing, in 1870. Of all the Arnold children, he had the most adventurous life. After graduating from Oxford, where he occupied the same rooms as his father, fate took him on an expedition to study the Mayan ruins of Yucatan. While in Mexico he quarreled with a wealthy grandee whom he found molesting a native girl, and was warned to leave the country within a week's time. Quite indifferent to the risks he ran, he calmly spent his week out and then left for Burma, where he became the editor of a bilingual newspaper. The paper supported the welfare of the Burmese, rather than the interests of the government, and William Arnold was soon in hot water again. With his quixotic flair for defending women in distress, he undertook to publicize the case of a Burmese girl who had been ill-used by a British officer, and found himself jailed by the authorities for his plain speaking. Word of the affair reached London, and the Burmese government, still more embarrassed, was obliged to set him free. On the day of his release, word had gone round among the native population, who were ready in crowds to cheer their champion. To their surprise, he took the occasion to

make a speech urging them always to be faithful to the British raj. Then feeling that Burma held nothing more for him, he left for India, purchased an estate, married a Moslem woman, and raised a family of Eurasian children. He met his death when a native, who differed with him as to the wisdom of cutting down a sacred tree which blocked one of his bullock-cart roads, drove a spear through his chest.

The youngest son, born around 1873, was named Edwin Gilbert, to which was further added the name of Emerson. It happened that shortly after he was born, Ralph Waldo Emerson was a guest of the Arnolds in Kent. One evening after dinner, as the family was assembled in the drawing room, the nurse brought in the baby to be shown to the honored guest. Spreading his hands over the infant's head, Emerson prayed aloud and blessed him; whereupon Arnold, laying his hands over those of the philosopher, said, "The name of this child is Emerson." As one might expect of one whose life began under such auspices, Emerson Arnold was interested in Oriental philosophy, becoming, in fact, a convert to Theosophy. By calling he was a doctor and served at one time as medical officer of the Fiji Islands. He was twice married, but had no children.

The home life of the Arnolds during these years was happy and affectionate. We have glimpses of it, both from the reminiscences of Arnold's own children and from the writings of Francis Allston Channing, Fanny's brother, who later became Baron Channing of Wellingborough. Channing wrote and privately printed two memorial volumes, one in memory of his daughter Elizabeth, and the other for his sister Blanche, both of which give minutely circumstantial accounts of life in the Channing family during the seventies, and contain frequent references to "Fanny, Edwin and the children." The two families were very close, and spent a good deal of time in each other's company. Arnold and his father-in-law saw each other often, enjoying long talks together, while Blanche and Mrs. Channing spent many happy days with Fanny at Sidcup.

Arnold was deeply interested in the sciences and able to communicate this enthusiasm to his children. In his home, in one corner

of his library, was a small but well-stocked chemical laboratory, to which he devoted such time as he could spare from his other interests. Julian tells how, as a very small boy, his curiosity led him to attempt a few experiments of his own. In his father's absence he invaded the Holy of Holies and started to mix the chemicals at random. The first mixture produced a vigorous explosion, and the second gave off fumes which left him in a stupor, sprawled in an armchair, where his father later found him. Far from discouraging such an interest, Arnold undertook to teach the boy chemistry himself, and thereafter they did their experiments together. Even the dinner table was sometimes turned into an impromptu laboratory, to the imminent danger of the glassware.

When Lester and Julian were twelve and nine years old, their father called both of them into council and urged each one to take up some hobby which would give him pleasure throughout life. Each was allowed a week to make up his mind. Lester chose natural history, and was given a set of mahogany cabinets, together with butterfly nets, textbooks and collecting boxes; with this start he became an enthusiastic amateur naturalist, and years later wrote a book on the bird life of England. Julian chose geology and was given a similar cabinet, with hammers, collecting bags, and a score of museum specimens as a nest egg. In addition, Arnold prepared a long scroll four or five feet long, decorated with illuminated capitals and little drawings, illustrating the history of the earth through successive geological eras down to the present. These collections grew apace, largely as a result of long rambles which he took with the boys through the English countryside. It was an inflexible rule on these trips that no living thing should be hurt on Sundays, however rare the specimen might be, and Arnold himself would never consent to kill anything.

Frequently Arnold was able to take Fanny and the older children still further afield: to France, to the Low Countries, and once in the summer of 1876, as far as Norway. This last was an excursion which was even then becoming popular among English tourists with a love of scenery and a taste for hunting. The party left Hull



on the S. S. *Hero* of the Wilson Line, reaching Christiania after three days of rough travel across the North Sea, during which time most of the passengers were thoroughly sick. Julian's discomfort was heightened by the fact that his sleeping quarters were on top of the ship's wine locker, from which he had to be dislodged whenever a passenger was thirsty. In Norway itself, the trip was idyllic. The route led over the mountains of southern Norway to the Sogne Fjord, then south into Hallingdal and back to Christiania, a route so rugged that the party could travel only a few miles a day, with plenty of time for hunting, picnicking and botanizing along the road. Fanny sketched, Julian fished, while Lester and his father went shooting, although their best efforts bagged them only a few wild ducks. It was early in August before they reached Christiania again, and as a week or two of Arnold's leave remained, they returned through Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Belgium and Calais, in order to avoid another trip across the North Sea.

Usually the summers were spent closer to home, at some English resort. In July, 1872, the family was at St. Leonards, near Hastings, on the Sussex coast, and another year Fanny spent June at Seaford, between Brighton and Beachy Head, with her mother, sister and children. A few years later, Arnold bought a country place at Southend, Essex, called "Hamlet House." It had a wide hall and stairs, tall carved banisters painted white, large breezy rooms, and was surrounded by splendid trees and quiet lanes that led down to the sea. The family was deeply fond of the place, and Arnold did some of his best writing there, including portions of *The Light of Asia*. The Channings were regularly made welcome, and Blanche made Hamlet House the theme of several paintings and at least one poem.

During the last years of the seventies, the Channings began to visit Scotland in the summertime. Their house was in the Ardlie valley above Perth, where the Arnolds visited them occasionally in the summer of 1880 for fishing and country outings. This glimpse of the Highlands pleased Arnold so much that two years later he leased a house of his own. The estate was "Glengyle," the property

of the Duke of Argyll, a low, spreading, massive building that had once been occupied by Rob Roy, located at the head of Loch Katrine. Arnold spent the summer there writing *Pearls of the Faith*, while the boys revelled in the outdoor life, Julian, for one, pursuing it so vigorously that he lost his way on the Glenshee moors and spent one August night out on the heather. On Sundays the family—or at least the ladies—would row down Loch Katrine to attend the Kirk, and on one such occasion Emerson, who had been playing cards for small stakes the night before, dropped in the collection plate a pocketful of I.O.U.'s which he had gathered from the guests and members of the family. The next day the minister called—and collected the debts! The most unusual adventure at Glengyle came when, in the course of laying a water pipe under one of the rooms, the diggers uncovered an iron-bound oaken box about three feet beneath the floor. It contained a cache of seventeenth-century weapons, grim relics of the Scottish wars of religion. One had been thrust through the letter or edict of some enemy, as a gesture of defiance, and another had for its handle the arm bone of a man. Still another was a two-handed sword over five feet long, with a three-farthing piece of Elizabeth's reign bound to the crossbar as a talisman.

These holiday excursions and foreign tours indicate that Arnold by this time enjoyed a comfortable income. It was derived partly from his journalistic work and partly from his writing, for during the eighties his literary powers were at their peak, and so was his reputation. This popularity was due almost entirely to one poem, *The Light of Asia*, which appeared in 1879, but the preceding years were not idle, as can be seen from the ten books which he published between 1859 and 1879. The first of these appeared at Bombay while Arnold was still in India, a school edition of the *Hitopadesha* with the Sanskrit text and a vocabulary in Sanskrit, English and Marathi. Two years later, after returning to England, he issued an English translation with notes and pictures, under the title *The Book of Good Counsels*.

Arnold's next book was a major work and bears witness to his continuing interest in the Orient. This was *The Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration of British India*, published in two volumes, the first appearing in 1862 and the second in 1865. Amid the vast mass of his poetry and journalism, this book stands out as his most impressive piece of sustained scholarly writing. James Andrew Ramsay, Lord Dalhousie, was a figure worthy of any historian's pen, for this poor Scottish noble who rose to be Governor-General of India ruled that country with more dignity and authority than most kings can command. It was he who rounded out the map of British India in the form it kept for a century thereafter, who toppled rajahs and maharajahs from their thrones, and who laid the foundations for many reforms which survived the storm that burst over the land under Lord Canning, his successor.

True to its title, the book deals more with the work than with the person of the Governor-General, so that Dalhousie remains a stately but shadowy figure in its pages. Volume I is a history of the second Sikh War of 1849, following all the tangled threads of diplomatic and military maneuvering that led to the annexation of the Punjab. Volume II is more varied and covers the steps that brought about the annexation of Burma, Berar, Satara, Nagpur, Oudh, Tanjore, and other lesser states. Arnold used many varied sources for his work and used them with discrimination. Dalhousie's personal papers were impounded by the terms of his will for fifty years and so were not accessible, but Arnold drew on everything else available, from official dispatches and Blue Books to letters, memoirs and private information. One man who helped him was certainly Sir John Lawrence, who was living in England at the time Arnold wrote, and to whom the first volume was dedicated. Since 1856 a number of books have been written about Lord Dalhousie, some criticizing his policies, and still more in his defense. Most of them are based on material inaccessible to Arnold. Nevertheless, his book remains the pioneer work and the starting point for all later studies.

For the student who is not interested so much in Dalhousie as in the development of Arnold's thought, this book is interesting chiefly for those passages which discuss the role of the British in India. Arnold was a frank imperialist, who believed that British rule was not only for the best interest of the Indians, but further justified on the principle that strong races ought to subdue the weak, just as in physics the greater body attracts the lesser. Although he was careful to insist that strength never justifies immorality, he seems at times to have an almost mystical respect for power as the source of political authority. British imperialism sometimes defended itself in those terms; Carlyle had already spoken thus, and Kipling was later to do so, but it would be unfair to quote Arnold out of context to make it appear that he believed in the divine right of the sword. Certainly he was no forerunner of Fascism, and he would have been deeply shocked could he have foreseen what was to become in the twentieth century of the doctrine of the master race. Furthermore, he never argued that political inferiority meant cultural or spiritual inferiority; indeed, it was as spokesman and defender of the Indian religions that he won his most lasting reputation.

Much of the rigor of his position is modified in the second volume, in which he takes Dalhousie to task for his program of annexation. Inspired by what Arnold termed a passion for "imperial symmetry," Dalhousie made it his open policy to "abandon no just and honorable accession of territory or revenue." Sometimes these annexations consisted in wiping out the last vestiges of sovereignty of puppet monarchs who had exercised no real power for a generation or more; this was done at the deaths of the rulers of the Carnatic and of Tanjore. Once a large province was forfeited for debt; this was done when the Nizam of Hyderabad was forced to cede Berar. In at least one instance, the incompetence of the native dynasty seemed excuse enough for wiping out a corrupt native regime; this was done in Oudh. The most vexed cases arose when a native prince died without heirs. Then it was customary for the ruler to adopt a son, sometimes on his deathbed, in order to



carry on the line. By Hindu custom such an heir is legally and sacramentally a true son and is expected to perform the religious rites necessary to insure the speedy passage of the father's soul to heaven. In the eyes of the British, however, this pious custom seemed only a subterfuge by which titles that might otherwise revert to the paramount power could be transferred to those who had no right to them. Accordingly, Dalhousie began systematically to apply the "doctrine of lapse," under which such sovereignties were taken over by the British East India Company. The principle was invoked several times: at Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi, to the alarm of the other native princes.

Arnold denounced this policy in unsparing terms, as being unjust in itself, and unwise in that it led to discontent that added fuel to the flames of the Mutiny. The annexation of Berar he condemned as a piece of unscrupulous usury perpetrated by "the Shylocks of Calcutta, with no Portia by to reprove the transgression of the bond." In the case of Nagpur, he was indignant at the way in which the personal property of the Rajah's widow was confiscated and sold for a song. The annexation of Oudh, on the other hand, he was prepared to justify on the grounds that the court of Lucknow was so vicious that only its extirpation could save the province; his defense of Dalhousie in this matter was probably a direct reply to Samuel Lucas' defense of the native dynasty.

No one should pretend to judge the rights and wrongs of any problem so complex and ambiguous as that of the British Raj. In any event, the account is now closed. The record is one on which England may look back with mixed feelings. All the moral ambiguity in the situation is apparent in Arnold's analysis of Dalhousie's rule. As a sincere imperialist, he was ready to justify England's over-all policy, and yet he could not stomach the way in which that policy worked out in detail. When it was a case of the "vigorous" Saxon versus the "effete" Hindu, there was no choice where his sympathies lay; when the choice lay between Jimmy Ramsay and the Rani of Jhansi, the question did not seem so simple. The tension which this moral ambiguity generated ex-

pressed itself in a passionate defense of each party in turn, depending on which seemed, in the complex interplay of political forces, to have the moral advantage at the moment.

Nowhere does this tension find a more curious expression than in Arnold's vindication of the conquest of Pegu. As he clearly saw, Dalhousie opened negotiations with the King of Burma in 1852 fully intending to force the issue to open war; and when war came, it was an easy matter for the Governor-General, with his love of "imperial symmetry," to fill in the gap that separated the British possessions in Arakan and Tenasserim by annexing the wealthy province of Pegu. Arnold complacently pointed out that whatever wrong was done the Burmese rulers, the common folk profited by the change and showed themselves willing, even anxious, to throw off the tyranny of their own kings. At worst, he argued, the seizure of lower Burma was a "salutary thing done questionably," a trifling offense "against etiquette," that could be borne "without much fret of conscience." Yet in summing up the total policy of the Indian government, he compared it to counting out the spoil of brigands in a wood, rather than a history of British statesmanship. Dalhousie, he bitterly declared, had gone beyond the limits of justice, common sense and good faith in a deliberate attempt to steal an empire. Arnold's moral judgments were confused, though hardly more so than the events he was recording.

Arnold knew that the British could not rule India forever. As he pointed out, their only rivals were the native dynasties and the native soldiery which the British themselves drilled and fed. Even during the height of the Mutiny, resistance to the Company did not have any broad basis of popular support among the peasantry, who were more concerned with their thralldom to the village moneylender than with questions of high policy. "When the people despair of us," he predicted, "the end of our time will have come." The real work of transforming India was not a matter of dynastic policy or even of administrative reform; it was a matter of introducing Western ways of thought, especially science and technology. Before this transformation could be completed, the British would

have to be dismissed from India, and they should accept such a conclusion as the right and natural one to work for. We may take this wise and generous prediction as Arnold's final judgment on the Indian situation, and the way in which it has come to pass would do credit to any prophet.

After the publication of the second volume of *Dalhousie's Administration*, and the death of his first wife, Arnold was silent for several years. The *Telegraph* took up his energies, and the only poetry that appeared under his name was a series of translations from French, Greek and Sanskrit. The first of these appeared after Garibaldi was defeated by French and Papal troops at Mentana in 1867, a defeat which inspired Victor Hugo, then in exile on Guernsey, to write one of his passionate diatribes against Louis Napoleon, after the manner of *Les Châtiments*. Garibaldi replied in verse of his own, thanking his illustrious friend for the poem. Arnold, an eager supporter of the cause of Italian freedom, translated both poems and published them in the *Morning Star*. Later they were reprinted in pamphlet form with a preface by the reformer and freethinker, George Jacob Holyoake, who had labored so hard to raise funds and sympathy for Garibaldi in England. The pamphlet occasioned little comment: the British were not impressed by Hugo's invective anyway, and Arnold's translation did not improve upon it.

The second piece of translation was more ambitious and was undertaken at the invitation of Cassell, Petter and Gilpin, the publishers. This was *The Poets of Greece*, a book of about two hundred pages, published in 1869 and dedicated to Fanny. It was a florilegium of Greek poetry in translation, with a running commentary, both critical and biographical. The comment avoided a heavy or learned tone, for Arnold was writing for the average reader, who knew no Greek, and not for the professional classicist. Most of the facts were taken from Pierron's *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque*, a textbook designed for use in the French *lycées*. He followed this model closely, both in arrangement and content, so that often his chapters are only abridged paraphrases of the original French.

The book was only a potboiler and met with no acclaim. The *Athenaeum* condemned Arnold's judgments as unscholarly prejudices masquerading as argument, criticized in detail the translation from Homer, and disagreed with Arnold's defense of Sappho's virtue. On the other hand, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the essayist and Arnold's cousin by marriage, thought well of it. He had made several translations of his own from the Greek, including a version of the same ode to Aphrodite by Sappho that Arnold had translated, and he agreed in defending Sappho from the charge of Lesbianism. A common interest in literature, as well as family ties, drew the two men together. They corresponded occasionally, and in 1872, when Higginson was travelling in England, he visited the Arnolds at Sidcup and spent a pleasant evening discussing what his host called their "mutual Lesbianity." Presumably he meant their common interest in Sappho.

*The Poets of Greece* never went into a second edition, but the best of the translations continued to find readers, for Arnold reprinted them more than once in his collected works. Chief among them was a translation of *Hero and Leander* by Musaeus. Selections of this appeared in *The Poets of Greece*, and the whole poem came out as a separate volume five years later. It made a thin book, attractively bound in light cloth, with the broad margins and red lined borders which Victorian printers loved to use for fine editions. The frontispiece was by Fanny, and showed an extremely elongated Hero placing a lamp in her window at Sestos. The reviewers were kinder to this book than to its predecessor; in fact, the critic for *Belgravia* wrote a long and friendly article arguing that Arnold had actually improved on Musaeus, and that his "verses would bring tears into intelligent eyes, tears that the occasion merits." The modern reader will finish the poem without weeping, but he will find it graceful, readable, effective, and much the best of Arnold's translations from the Greek.

The little volume was dedicated to Robert Browning, "in tribute of respect and admiration." Arnold, who made it a point to know everyone in London worth knowing, was a friend of



Browning and sometimes his host. On one visit, Browning found little Julian reading a copy of his poems, won as a prize in school. Pleased with such an obvious bit of flattery, he offered to read one of his own works aloud, and began with the "Grammarians's Funeral," reciting it in a low and uninspired voice, in no way adequate to the force of the words. Julian stood it as long as he could, and then exclaimed, "Oh! you should hear my father read that poem!" Arnold entered the room at that moment, and Browning good-humoredly handed the book over to his host, who declaimed the famous lines with all the expression and vigor at his command.

The review of *Hero and Leander* was the first which Arnold had ever received couched in such flattering language, and it marked the turning point in his literary fortunes. The success was repeated the following year with the publication of *The Indian Song of Songs*, an ambitious verse translation of the *Gita Govinda* of the Bengali poet, Jayadeva. The Sanskrit poem is a religious allegory, cast in the form of an idyll describing the love of Krishna, representing the human soul, for Radha, typifying spiritual and moral enlightenment. As in the Hebrew *Song of Songs*, to which Arnold compared it, the language is so sensuous that the reader is in danger of forgetting the spiritual meaning of the poem. Although the *Gita Govinda* had been known to Orientalists from the time of Sir William Jones, there was no English verse translation before Arnold. Like most of his translations, this is more of a paraphrase than a close equivalent of the original. The rhymes and meters of Jayadeva are too complex to be rendered easily, and the erotic language needed pruning before it could be acceptable to Victorian ears, so that Arnold was obliged to leave out part of the eleventh *sarga* and all of the twelfth. Even with this bowdlerization, *The Indian Song of Songs* is a rich piece of writing, as warm and rich as an Indian springtime, and almost as cloying in its sweetness.

Once again the critics were kind, for literary reputations grow like snowballs, and one success will make the reviewers more

charitable to the next effort. T. W. Rhys Davids, an Orientalist of the first rank, gave the poem the prestige of his support in a review in *The Academy*, rating it as the best translation of Jayadeva for the general reader that had yet appeared. The *Athenaeum*, on the other hand, made some harsh criticisms of Arnold's system of transliteration, his use of diacritical marks, and his division of Sanskrit words. Most readers, however, were ready to ignore such technicalities and to accept the poem gladly as a rich, colorful and romantic piece of writing.

## CHAPTER V

### THE LIGHT OF ASIA: 1879

Arnold's translation of the *Gita Govinda* marks his first use of Indian religion as a theme for poetry, and with this poem he hit on the literary formula that was to make him famous: to write verse that should be rich in style and color, exotic in theme and setting, sentimental in tone, yet sufficiently religious to satisfy the Victorian public's demand for high seriousness. His choice of India for his subject, rather than some other land, was dictated by his own experience, but he would not have chosen it had there not already been an audience for such writing. India was then the richest and by far the most glamorous of England's foreign possessions; it had been in the public eye since the days of Clive and Hastings, and was the subject of a steadily increasing number of books. On the other hand, its literary possibilities had only begun to be exploited, so that when Arnold first published *The Light of Asia* in 1879, he was able to offer the public something new enough to be exciting, yet something for which it was already prepared.

There is no place in a book of this scope to record the whole history of England's cultural contacts with the East, especially as they have already been the subject of a number of detailed studies. The full story would start with the travelers' narratives in Hakluyt and Purchas; would follow the East India Company from its origins in the seventeenth century, to its rise to power in the eighteenth, and its downfall in the nineteenth; would trace the development of Oriental fiction from the *conte orientale* through Taylor to Kipling. It would examine the pseudo-Oriental poetry of Landor, Southey and Moore, and it would trace Eastern influence in scores of familiar objects and buildings, from the Paisley shawl to the Royal Pavilion at Brighton. Most important of all, it would tell of the long line of Orientalists who translated the Sanskrit and Pali texts, compiled the first dictionaries of Eastern

languages, and made the first serious studies of Indian religion: Halhed, Wilkins and Jones in the eighteenth century, Hodgson, Turnour and Burnouf in the early nineteenth, Max Müller, Monnier-Williams and Rhys Davids in the later nineteenth century, to mention only a few.

These scholars did more in their quiet fashion to prepare the way for *The Light of Asia* than the whole body of fiction and poetry that had been written about India. The Anglo-Indian novel, picturesque though it was, formed no real basis for understanding between East and West. Its Orientalism was a matter of plot and setting, rather than of ideas. If Europe was to learn anything of intellectual or spiritual value from India, it had to be philosophically and religiously receptive. This receptivity was fostered in the nineteenth century by many forces, but the broadest expression which we can find to cover them all is "religious pluralism," or the belief that all religions have at least a portion of the truth, and that consequently each deserves respect. It was an attitude analogous to that artistic eclecticism which made the history of Victorian architecture a series of revivals: Greek, Gothic, Romanesque and Neo-classic. It resembles that literary eclecticism which made it possible for Longfellow to draw inspiration indifferently from medieval Italy, the Norse sagas, the American Indians, and ancient Greece. It is related to the new drive for cultural self-determination which caused the suppressed nationalities of Europe to become politically and culturally self-conscious. The religious egalitarianism of Arnold and his contemporaries was a radical departure from the classical Christian attitude, which regarded Christianity as the only true faith and all other religions as heathen errors. It would be hard to point to any modern intellectual development of more importance than this fundamental change in *Weltanschauung* which appeared in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Many elements entered into the new attitude. The most important was the universalizing and rationalizing spirit of the Age of Enlightenment, an age that sought to reduce religion to a few self-evident, reasonable and universally valid propositions. Only



the universal Logos mattered, and any concrete, particular theophany—the Incarnation, for example—was a scandal to the reason and a stumbling block to faith. This attitude by itself, however, would not have produced pluralism, but rather a stronger desire for uniformity. It was necessary for the philosophers also to explain how variety and divergence among religions had arisen. One of the first answers to this question was attempted by Montesquieu, who suggested that differences in climate had caused differences in race and temperament, so that the religion and institutions appropriate to one nation might not suit another. This suggestion was developed during the eighteenth century, appearing again in Mme. de Staël's theory that the literatures of Europe reflect the spirit of the races which produce them. As the nineteenth century progressed, and romanticism displaced neo-classicism, the interest in various forms of religion and culture increased. Many romantics were bored by the simple, universal truths in which their fathers had delighted, and turned to subjects that were strange, remote, individual, complex or mysterious. Much of the nineteenth-century interest in Oriental religion was the product of this romantic delight in the remote.

Thus it was that the nineteenth century inherited its belief that not only do all nations, all literatures, all religions, have something valuable to say, but that there is one universal truth underlying them all. These two drives, toward the particular and toward the universal, were reconciled for many of our grandfathers in terms of Hegelian idealism. Hegel saw in all cultural phenomena the operation of an historical dialectic through which the absolute manifested itself. According to his philosophy, each thesis generates its antithesis, and the two are reconciled in a synthesis which in its turn becomes a new thesis. Thus even the most primitive cult can be the first step in the endless process by which truth is revealed, and the most advanced religion may be displaced by some new synthesis. Hegelianism provided the philosophical justification for that characteristically nineteenth-century invention: the study of comparative religion.

These new ideas necessarily made men dissatisfied with the traditional claim of Christianity to be the sole custodian of religious truth, and it fell to the lot of the liberal wing of Protestantism to reappraise that claim. The liberals were not irreligious, as their alarmed opponents imagined; they were sincerely anxious to cling to those spiritual insights which they felt to be Christianity's true claim to authority, and to reaffirm those insights divested of all that was parochial, exclusive, or limiting. Arnold was part of this liberal movement and wrote for an audience that sympathized with it. Although he never begrudged Christianity the reverence due it, and although he always regarded it as *primus inter pares*, he never wavered in his insistence that Truth speaks many languages besides Hebrew and Greek. This belief was the constant theme of his most serious work, his chief claim to fame in his own time, and the principal reason for studying him today.

Arnold set about writing *The Light of Asia* quite deliberately as a witness for religious liberalism. It was composed during the busy months when England was in an uproar over the Eastern Question and when the *Daily Telegraph* was hotly fulminating against the Russians abroad and Gladstone at home. Arnold did not have much spare time and turned to poetry for relaxation in the few moments which he could snatch from his work. Much of it was written at Hamlet House, Southend, overlooking the mouth of the Thames. Other pages were composed at odd moments, while travelling to work by train, or jotted down on envelopes, margins of newspapers, the backs of menus, and even upon his shirt cuffs. Fortunately, he had a mind impervious to most distractions. If no pen were handy a pencil would do, and if that were not to be had, a piece of firewood could be whittled into shape for use.

The first edition of *The Light of Asia* appeared in the summer of 1879, as a modest octavo volume bound in yellow cloth, with the name of Trübner and Company on the spine. The title page was made up of no less than seven different fonts of type, and the ugly plates of this first printing remained the identifying mark

of all the authorized editions, both English and American, for the next fifty years.

The poem is in eight books of blank verse, with some five or six hundred lines in each, told by a narrator who is characterized only as "an imaginary Buddhist votary." Except for scattered lyrics, and one long didactic passage in rhymed quatrains, the story is baldly chronological, consisting of a series of incidents taken from the early life of Buddha. For this reason one critic felt that it lacked the unity necessary to an epic and should be regarded merely as a collection of "Idylls of the Buddh." The first four books tell the familiar story of the early life of Prince Siddhartha: how his father, King Suddhodana, brought him up in seclusion amid every sensual pleasure; how the prince was shocked into a realization of the existence of evil by meeting an old man, a sick man, and a corpse; and how, in a great act of renunciation he left his palace and family, faring out into the world as a mendicant, to find the cause of human suffering and seek salvation for all mankind. Books V and VI begin a new action, rising to a second climax. Siddhartha is shown as a wandering preacher and ascetic, debating theology with Brahmins and doing obscure works of mercy. Finally his search for enlightenment comes to its end in a night of meditation under the Bo tree, when, despite the temptations of the Prince of Darkness, he enters the supreme peace and enlightenment of nirvana. All nature rejoices at the triumph, and the sixth book closes with the first words of Siddhartha, now the Buddha, uttered after enlightenment. The last books are the falling action of the story. Buddha returns to his father's capital and preaches the Law so persuasively that his whole family become his disciples and enter the Way of Salvation. The poem closes with a didactic appendix, or sermon, written in rhymed quatrains, giving a summary of the less technical side of Buddhist doctrine: karma and dharma, the Four Noble Truths, the Eight-fold Path, and nirvana.

The textual study of *The Light of Asia* is not very complex. Five years after the original edition appeared, Arnold revised his

text, and the new readings appear in all authorized editions from 1885 on. The pirated editions, on the other hand, continued to use the old readings for many years. The revisions were many, but of no great importance, and consisted mostly of slight changes in punctuation, capitalization and the use of the hyphen. Verbal changes were very few, and commonly involved only a word or two; they seem to have been made for various reasons, such as to correct an error of fact, to make an image more vivid, to gain smoothness, or for the sake of alliteration.

The first edition was an instant success, and was followed by a second within the year. New ones appeared with monotonous regularity, until by 1885 Trübner had issued over thirty. Thereafter the sales in England tapered off somewhat, though new editions continued to appear in the twentieth century, and the book is still listed by the original publishers.

In the United States, where British works were not protected by copyright, the publishing history was more interesting. The first copy of the poem in the *New World* was sent by William Henry Channing to Bronson Alcott, with the request that it be suitably reviewed by F. B. Sanborn and others of the Transcendentalist circle. Alcott had always been interested in Oriental religion, and he was glad to do a favor for an old friend; accordingly he undertook with pleasure the job of publicizing the book, perhaps the more so as he imagined that it had been written by a brother of Matthew Arnold. He was then dean of the Concord summer school of philosophy and was in a position to put the book in the hands of those who would be most interested. Within a week Sanborn and Ripley wrote rave reviews, and soon after, Oliver Wendell Holmes did the same; by September 5 it was in press. When it appeared in October, Alcott distributed it enthusiastically to his friends, including Emerson. Partly because of this distinguished sponsorship, *The Light of Asia* was probably more widely known in America even than in England.

Arnold's popularity caused his American publishers no end of trouble. Roberts Brothers paid him a regular royalty as a matter



of courtesy, but since English works were protected by no copyright in the United States, nothing could stop the pirated editions. Early in 1880 the *Library Magazine* brought out a cheap reprint which sold for ten cents,<sup>1</sup> and soon after, the *American Book Exchange* was retailing a cheap edition at three cents, postpaid. Faced with such competition, Roberts first tried to appeal to the honor of the book dealers not to carry the rival editions; when this appeal failed the publishers tried the more practical expedient of cutting the price to one dollar for the cloth edition and twenty-five cents for a cheap paper copy. They also added two extra poems, entitled "After Death in Arabia," and "She and He," but this device was of only temporary value, for the extra poems were soon pirated as well. It is hard to say how many unauthorized editions appeared in all, but there must have been several dozen. Arnold himself was not much disturbed by this piracy; in fact he rather enjoyed knowing that his poem was so popular and tried to collect as many of the editions as he could. Laurels, as he put it, were meant to be worn, not eaten.

*The Light of Asia* appeared in the usual number of illustrated, annotated and gift editions, as well as the cheapest of paperbound ones. No one knows just how many there were in all. The *Dictionary of National Biography*, usually cited as an authority, states that sixty appeared in England and eighty in the United States, but the figures are misleading, since many "editions" were only new printings from old plates, and carry no distinguishing mark. The present writer has traced eighty-three bibliographically distinct printings, exclusive of translations, but the count does not pretend to be complete. No one knows, either, how many individual copies were sold. Professor Charles Braden of Northwestern University once wrote to the various publishers in the hope of finding exact figures, but with little success. Five publishers gave total sales of over a hundred thousand copies, but their replies did not include sales of

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1 Many publishers of cheap reprints gave volume and serial numbers to their books to take advantage of the low postal rates for magazines.

many of the most important companies, especially Kegan Paul, who had sole English rights. Some idea of the volume of sales may be had by comparing the figures for other best-sellers of the period. *Ben Hur* sold two and a half million, *Five Little Peppers* and *Huckleberry Finn* sold over one million, *Ramona* and *Little Lord Fauntleroy* about half a million each. Bearing all these facts in mind, we should say that *The Light of Asia* sold not less than half a million copies and probably not more than one million. Whatever the true figures, it is clear that it enjoyed a sale such as few poems have had since.

Judgments on the style of *The Light of Asia* have been many and various. Oliver Wendell Holmes thought it worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with that of the New Testament, while Richard Henry Stoddard compared it to that of Swinburne, Rossetti and Matthew Arnold. On the other hand, some critics scarcely gave it credit for being a style at all and laughed at Arnold's poetry as merely journalism in pentameters. Such divergent opinions impose an extra responsibility on the modern critic. Fashions in poetry change, and lines that could stir our grandparents may sound flat to their grandchildren. It would be a very simple matter to show that Arnold's style is old-fashioned and that it casts no spell over the modern reader, but such a treatment would leave unexplained the fascination which it held for so sensible a critic as Holmes. On the other hand, we must try to find what it is that has prevented the poem from establishing itself as a recognized classic, despite its vast popularity in its own day.

The traits of style that most strike the casual reader are the richness of imagery, the music of the strange Indian words, and the exotic color which Westerners associate with the Orient. The Victorian reader was dazzled by such descriptive passages as this:

The King gave order that his town should keep  
High festival; therefore the ways were swept,  
Rose-odors sprinkled in the street, the trees  
Were hung with lamps and flags, while merry crowds  
Gaped on the sword-players and posturers,

The jugglers, charmers, swingers, rope-walkers,  
 The nautch-girls in their spangled skirts and bells  
 That chime light laughter round their restless feet;  
 The masquers wrapped in skins of bear and deer,  
 The tiger-tamers, wrestlers, quail-fighters,  
 Beaters of drum and twanglers of the wire,  
 Who made the people happy by command.  
 Moreover from afar came merchant-men,  
 Bearing, on tidings of this birth, rich gifts  
 In golden trays; goat-shawls, and nard and jade,  
 Turkises, "evening-sky" tint, woven webs—  
 So fine twelve folds hide not the modest face—  
 Waist-clothes sewn thick with pearls, and sandal-wood;  
 Homage from tribute cities. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Odors, sights, sounds and textures are all used here to give the sense of bustle and stir typical of an Indian village scene.

This surface richness has been achieved at the expense of solid craftsmanship. The images have no organic unity, but are merely run together like beads on a string: they could be listed in any other order without materially affecting the picture. Moreover, Arnold does not know when to stop; a real poet could have said as much in a third the space. He was no master of words; usually they mastered him, and a swelling phrase could often carry him away before he could stop to consider what he was saying. His vocabulary is weak and overworks certain words, such as "soft," "bright," "beauteous," "radiant," "lovely," "fair," "divine," "jeweled," "rosy," and "gentle." These adjectives crop up on every page, setting the tone of the poem, and accounting for its cloying quality. One critic even made a count of these words and checked their frequency in Arnold against concordances of Milton, Shakespeare and Tennyson. He found that in comparison with *all* of Tennyson's writings up to that time, Arnold in one poem had used "soft" twelve times as often, "tender" twice as often, and "bright" only slightly

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2 *The Light of Asia*, I, 96-115.

less. The word "jeweled" is found six times in Book IV alone of *The Light of Asia* and almost never in the writings of the other three poets. Another feature of Arnold's style is his constant use of archaisms, neologisms, poetic contractions and fancy diction in general. Words beginning in "a-" especially fascinated him; his pages are clotted with such expressions as "adown," "aswoon" and "adead," this last being apparently his own coinage.

Arnold was, of course, using the accepted poetic diction of the time. By 1879 these terms were already a little faded, but the popular taste had not rejected them, and Arnold was too good a journalist to put himself out of contact with his readers by writing with the *avant-garde*. At times one can even detect actual limitations of popular Victorian poets. When Arnold makes his *devas* sing,

But life's way is the wind's way,

one thinks at once of Longfellow:

A boy's will is the wind's will.

The description of Siddhartha's pleasure palace has a distinctly Tennysonian ring:

Southward a grove of tamarind trees and sal,  
Thick set with pale sky-colored ganthi flowers,  
Shut out the world, save if the city's hum  
Came on the wind no harsher than when bees  
Hum out of sight in thickets.

This is only a transposition into a southern climate of Tennyson's poem, "The Gardener's Daughter":

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;  
And sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear  
The windy clanging of the minster clock.



Another Tennysonian trait is Arnold's use of echoes and repetition:

Painless thou shalt attain the close of pain.

Of milk-white marble built, and laid with slabs  
Of milk-white marble.

Tennyson's later work is full of this device.

The lyrical interludes scattered through the poem add to its appeal. Chief of these is the song of the devas in the third book, a song which appealed to every critic, and was incorporated into all the dramatizations of the poem. It is not deathless poetry, but it is a pleasant, well-turned lyric. The eighth book, with its quatrains, is a short, rhymed sermon and a fair example of didactic poetry. The tightness of the verse structure kept Arnold from being too diffuse and gave the verse a quotable, gnomic character reminiscent of the *Dhammapada*.

As for the quality of the blank verse, it improves as the poem progresses. Most of its obvious weaknesses are in the first two or three books, and Arnold learned much as he went along. Some of the best verse he ever wrote is in the renunciation scene of Book IV, when Siddhartha says good-bye to his sleeping wife and child. The situation lends itself to sentimentality and over-writing, yet Arnold somehow avoided these pitfalls. The lines have dignity, pathos and restraint; they are the closest Arnold ever came to writing real poetry.

Certainly his contemporaries admired his style. Ripley, in the review which Alcott persuaded him to write, spoke enthusiastically of its power of invention, splendor of coloring, and felicity of phrase. Still another critic compared it to that of Milton, Titian, Fra Angelico and—anticlimactically—Thomas Moore. The one dissenting note in this chorus of praise was Professor William Cleaver Wilkinson of the University of Chicago. Wilkinson was a Baptist minister, and his theological dislike of Arnold's Buddhism made it easier for him to see the weakness of Arnold's poetry. His comments were always caustic and often flippant. His method was to analyze individual passages line by line, mercilessly pointing out

every loose reference, vague metaphor, redundant construction, or other fault. Arnold, he argued, was a journalist, accustomed to turning out work hastily for quick consumption, and so was more attentive to superficial ornament than to solid craftsmanship. Of course he was right. The average reader, however, liked the poem in spite of these faults, or perhaps because of them, and his judgment agreed with that of Holmes and Ripley, Sanborn and Stoddard. For thirty years *The Light of Asia* was a household classic, and it is not wholly forgotten even today.

Friendly reviews and large sales are one measure of popularity, but there is no better proof of the success of Arnold's poem than the many translations and dramatizations of it. When we realize that it was made into an opera, a Broadway play, two cantatas and a movie, and that it has been translated into half a dozen languages, it is clear that we have here no ordinary best-seller. The first translation was in German by Dr. Arthur Pfungst, a student of Buddhism and one of the first members of the International Buddhist Society. His version, which appeared in Leipzig in 1887, was made from the 24th English edition, and is in very literal blank verse. A second translation, with extensive notes, was made by one Konrad Wernicke in 1891, and is almost as literal as the first. The third German version was by Albrecht Schaeffer, and was entitled *Das Kleinod im Lotos*. It appeared in 1923. Far more free and imaginative than the Pfungst translation, it used rhymed couplets freely and took extensive liberties with the text. The eighth book was left out entirely, and a number of scenes were mercifully condensed. *The Light of Asia* has also been translated into Dutch (1895), French (1899), Czech (1906), Italian (1909), Swedish, Esperanto, and possibly other languages.

The life of Buddha is in its very nature incapable of dramatization, since its climax, the enlightenment under the Bo tree, is an inner experience, hard to convey in words and impossible to represent in action. This difficulty did not prevent at least six bold writers from trying the impossible. The first, and much the most

interesting of these attempts, was an opera by Isidore de Lara, entitled *La Luce dell' Asia*.

De Lara was an English composer of Jewish extraction, born in 1858. He was best known for his operas, including *Amy Robsart* (1893), *Moina* (1897), *Messalina* (1899), *Solea* (1906), *Sanga* (1910), *Nail* (1910), *The Three Masks* (1912), and *The Three Musketeers* (1920). His autobiography, published in 1928, gives the impression of a vain and utterly self-centered man, but one who had led an interesting and varied life. The book tells, among many other things, how De Lara first met Arnold at the house of Beatty Kingston, a leader writer on the *Telegraph*. That was in 1886. De Lara did not read *The Light of Asia* until two years later, when the Duchesse de Richelieu gave him a copy with the suggestion that it be set to music. (De Lara takes considerable pleasure in his memoirs in parading the names of his titled friends.) He took the book with him to Paris and on the way read and reread it. It impressed him deeply, and that summer, after returning to England, he entered on his task with enthusiasm, finishing it the same year. The work was originally cast in the form of a cantata, with Kingston preparing the libretto and Arnold lending his friendly interest.

With the help of Mr. Harry Higgins, lawyer to Sir Augustus Harris, who was then manager of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, plans were made to have the cantata performed in London in 1891. The suggestion that it be made into an opera came from the French baritone, Victor Maurel, who saw an opportunity for himself in the leading role. The opera was duly written, and Maurel succeeded in persuading Sir Augustus Harris to produce it at Covent Garden. Much to the annoyance of both De Lara and Kingston, Harris insisted on an Italian libretto, which was written by one Signor Mazzucato, son of De Lara's old master, the director of the Milan conservatory. Except for his irritation at having to translate an English opera, intended for English audiences, into a foreign language, De Lara was happy with the project. Harris gave him a good cast and every assistance needed for the produc-

tion. The trouble-maker was Maurel, who kept demanding alterations in the score and, once they had been made, restoring the original version as preferable. Finally on July 17, as the opening night was approaching, Maurel refused outright to sing, claiming that the opera was insufficiently rehearsed. De Lara felt that every member of the cast knew his part to perfection except Maurel, and said so publicly. The upshot of the squabble was that the performance had to be postponed until the next season. The dispute spilled over into the newspapers, where Maurel, feeling that De Lara and his friends had received too much favorable publicity, published a long letter in his own defense, arguing that the opera was not yet ready to be performed. De Lara replied that Maurel had failed him by not learning his part, and that the composer and conductor were the ones to decide whether the opera were ripe for production. He also accused Maurel of lying, and years later showed that he never outlived the grudge by putting several pages of malicious stories about his former friend into his autobiography. Maurel's memoirs make no reference to the incident.

Harris stood by De Lara, so that the following year the opera was finally performed, probably the better for the wait. Lassalle of the Paris Opera played Siddhartha and Emma Eames sang Yasodhara. A slight accident marred the prologue. The actor who sang the opening lines was perched on the top of an immense globe. At the end of his aria a crane was supposed to lift him off, but unfortunately the mechanism stuck so that the hapless man spent a quarter of an hour suspended forty feet in the air.

The opera was in three acts, the first dealing with the betrothal of the prince, the second with the Renunciation, the third with the temptation of Mara and the final illumination. The text followed the poem closely, if allowance is made for the exigencies of translation and rhyme. One lyric, beginning "Loosen from thy feet the bangle," was taken from Arnold's translation of the *Gita Govinda*. The music was suggestive of Massenet and Saint-Saëns, tuneful and singable, but with little emphasis on orchestration except in one or two marches and dances. The song of the devas made a



good impression both for its picturesque, fanciful quality and for its humming chorus. The reviews were generally favorable, if not wildly enthusiastic, and spoke of De Lara as a promising young composer who deserved to be encouraged. All agreed that the music was better for its lyric than for its orchestral quality (which is not fatal in an opera) and that the plot was essentially undramatic (which is fatal). The most interesting review was written by G. B. Shaw in *The World*. After pointing out the composer's immaturity, his weakness as an orchestrator, and the sameness of his mood, Shaw concluded that the opera "abounds in vocal melody of exceptional excellence," and praised it for its freshness and lack of pedantry or imitation. The review ended with some Shavian comments on provincial choral directors and their taste for stodgy oratorios.

*La Luce dell' Asia* was never revived. Some years later De Lara wrote a second Buddhist opera, *Le Reveil du Bouddha* (Ghent, 1904); it is less well known and seems not to have been published.

In the United States the only dramatization of Arnold's poem was made by Georgina Jones Walton, and first performed in 1918 at Krotona, California, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Christine Wetherill Stevenson of Philadelphia. Out of these outdoor performances—the play ran for thirty-five nights—developed the present Hollywood Bowl Concerts. The leading role was played by Walter Hampden, who liked the play well enough to use it to open his New York season of 1928 at Hampden's Theater in Columbus Circle. The production took two years to plan, and was staged on a lavish and glittering scale, with an enormous cast of fifty, sets by Claude Bragdon and dances by Ruth St. Denis. In short, it was more of a pageant than a play, and embroidered on Arnold's story more freely than De Lara's version had. The public liked it enough to keep it on the boards for only twenty-three performances, while the critics unanimously damned it. The critic for the *Sun* complained that the play was a dramatic failure, and that "minus the splendid fabric of setting and costume . . . it would be the usual double-barrelled bore." The language seemed uninspired, being "forged from the

usual blank verse and still more usual rosettes of correct enough rime." The audience, however, was delighted—the few that attended. Arnold's poem, long since abandoned by the high-brows, still commanded some following among the middle-brows and cult-ists. The critic for the *Evening Post* found the audience more interesting than the performers:

There were nuns sitting all alone, and old gentlemen completely clothed in white linen, and blank earnest faces slightly wearied by the search for truth, and the people one sees in theosophist book stores, and the round eye of the mild fanatic, and kindly and credulous eccentric mouths saying something about 'beautiful . . . beautiful.'

Such people are not part of the regular New York theater audience, and many of them must have been seeing their first play in years. Unfortunately for the producer, there were not enough of them. The opinion of the theatrical world was summed up in a caption in the *Herald Tribune*:

MR. HAMPDEN BRINGS BUDDHA TO THE OUTSKIRTS  
OF BROADWAY AND LEAVES HIM FLAT

After becoming a cantata, an opera and a play, nothing was left for *The Light of Asia* but to be filmed. It was produced in 1928 by a German company, Emelka of Munich, and was filmed in India with costumes, elephants, camels and horses furnished by the Maharajah of Jaipur. The flexibility of the medium made possible shots that could not have been represented on the stage, such as a scene of a cheetah killing a deer, but despite the lavishness of the production, the story was still plagued by the fatal defect that prevented De Lara's and Hampden's productions from achieving more than temporary success: it simply was not dramatic enough. In the absence of a script it is hard to tell how closely the film followed the poem, but from the accounts given by the reviewers, it would seem that the indebtedness to Arnold extended only to the title and the general theme. The only recorded showing in the United States

was in Boston in November, 1929, under the sponsorship of a film society known as "Artkino."

Four other dramatizations exist, though there is no evidence that they were ever performed professionally. In 1912 Trübner published an adaptation by a Bengali named Bose, which is slavishly literal in its adherence to Arnold's text. The original verse is transcribed word for word, with a few condensations and changes in sequence. A second dramatization appeared in 1915, published by Routledge, with incidental music and several illustrations. This version was intended for use in a girls' school, and had to be bowdlerized in places. The story is simplified to such a degree that any noticeable religious content has vanished, and anyone reading the play without knowledge of the original story would have trouble guessing just what it was for which Buddha was so famous. A third was published in 1922 by Trübner. As with the others, the Buddhist element is negligible, and there is no indication that it was ever produced. Still another version appeared in Calcutta from the press of Thacker, Spink and Co.; it made no more stir than the others. These plays all have a certain superficial glitter, but no dramatic quality; all were written by men who understood almost nothing of Buddhism, and in all, the religious content was diluted almost to extinction. Such popularity as they had was a parasitic thing: they owed their success to the poem, and apart from it commanded no attention.

In addition to these dramatizations, *The Light of Asia* inspired several imitations. The first of these indicates the extent of Arnold's influence on the younger men of his own university. Its title is *Sakya-Muni—The Story of Buddha*, written as the Newdigate Prize poem of 1887 by Sidney Arthur Alexander of Trinity College, later Canon and Treasurer of Saint Paul's Cathedral. It is cast in very conventional heroic couplets and written in an academic style, full of quotations and reminiscences of Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Matthew and Edwin Arnold. Nowhere does it show any of the vigor and youthful promise that marked Arnold's own Newdigate poem.

The closest of all Arnold's imitators was a certain Henry T. Niles, a horse-breeder of Toledo, Ohio, whose narrative poem *The Dawn and the Day* was privately published in 1894. The title suggests that the author's original intention was to continue the poem with a sequel on the life of Jesus, but this plan was not carried out. The poem covers the same ground as Arnold's, with the addition of later material taken from the Chinese pilgrim, Fa Hien. Certain features in *The Light of Asia* were objectionable to Mr. Niles, and these he altered, as the following footnote indicates:

In "The Light of Asia," the prince, after leaving his young wife, is made to pass through a somewhat extensive harem *en deshabelle*, which is described with voluptuous minuteness. Although there are some things in later Buddhist literature that seem to justify it, I can but regard the introduction of an institution entirely alien to every age, form and degree of Aryan civilization and so inconsistent with the tender conjugal love which was the strongest tie to his beloved home, as a serious blot on that beautiful poem, and as inconsistent with its whole theory, for no prophet ever came from a harem.

With the exception of the passages that offended Niles's horse-breeding sensibilities, the poem is plagiarized outright from Arnold, so that in some passages the borrowed material is about one half of the whole. However, tedious though it is, *The Dawn and the Day* is a tribute to the esteem in which Arnold was held by middle-brow America. A poem is not plagiarized in this way until a great many readers have admired it, and Niles's borrowings are sincere flattery.



## CHAPTER VI

# BUDDHISM FOR THE WEST

In writing *The Light of Asia*, Arnold followed his sources very closely, the most important of them being Samuel Beal's translation of the *Abhinishkramana Sutra*. This work, published in 1875, was an English translation of a Chinese text, which was in its turn a sixth-century translation from the Sanskrit. From it Arnold took most of his biographical material, so that nearly half the pages of his poem show some indebtedness to Beal. The second major source was *A Manual of Buddhism* by the Rev. Thomas Spence Hardy. Hardy was a Wesleyan missionary in Ceylon who wrote this account of Buddhism to help other missionaries understand the religion they hoped to displace. From it Arnold got his knowledge of Buddhist cosmology, the Indian systems of counting and measurement, much of the technical language of Buddhist philosophy, and the text of three Pali quotations, with their English translations. A third source was a translation of the *Dhammapada* by Max Müller which appeared in 1870, together with a translation of the Burmese version of the parables of Buddhagoshā. The most notable of these is the story of Kisagotami, the girl whom Buddha comforted for the loss of her child. Arnold took this episode and worked it up into one of the more effective passages of his poem.

From these three books, then, Arnold learned what he knew of the Buddhist scriptures. Possibly he read others, such as the *Lalitavistara* and the *Saddharma Pundarika*, which were then available in translation, but there is nothing in his poem that he could not have drawn more easily from Beal, Hardy and Buddhagoshā. It is harder to say how far he depended on the writings of European Orientalists, for their contribution was not so much in the details of the story as in his general understanding of the subject. However, his preface does mention Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire and Max Müller; so we may assume that he had read at least some of their

books. Rhys Davids did most of his work after *The Light of Asia* was published, which was unfortunate, since a study of his writings would have deepened Arnold's understanding of the subject.

Arnold always reworked his material in the same way. His alterations are of four kinds: he condensed the more tedious passages, expanded promising themes to which the original authors did not do justice, heightened the dramatic and romantic interest of some prosaic sections, and toned down the more incredible miracles, rationalizing them, reducing them to manageable proportions, or eliminating them completely. On the other hand, the story still kept enough supernatural machinery to lift it above the level of ordinary life. Arnold's characters do not move in the transcendent setting of the *Abhinishkramana Sutra*. They live in the same sort of world that we meet in the Christian Gospels: a natural world shot through with the supernatural, a real earth, but one over which the heavens hang so low that men and angels may pass from one to the other without difficulty.

Sometimes Arnold expanded his material enormously, as in the long renunciation scene in Book IV, in which Siddhartha says farewell to his sleeping wife and child. An incident which was passed over rather hurriedly in the original was thus made to stand out as the chief turning point of the plot. Such changes gave the story human interest and made it more attractive to an age that loved sentiment. Furthermore, Arnold did not hesitate to give a distinctly erotic tinge to parts of his poem. The legends speak, to be sure, of the sensual pleasures with which Suddhodana sought to dull his son's religious aspirations, but they always describe these indulgences without much detail. Arnold preferred to dwell on the picture of the eighteen-year-old Siddhartha and his bride alone in their perfumed nuptial chamber. The limits of Victorian propriety are never overstepped, and yet the passage is charged with erotic overtones. The modern reader is not shocked by innocent dalliance of this sort, but some of Arnold's readers were, and one testy critic found Yasodhara "incomparably brazen, animal and disgusting."

Arnold's use of his sources is least happy where it is most literal. Too often he could not resist the temptation to insert Sanskrit or Pali phrases where they could only be a distraction; at times one suspects him of merely showing off. For example, he sometimes transcribes whole stanzas of Pali into the body of the poem. These are the gathas, or solemn pronouncements which the Buddha made at his enlightenment and in his first sermon at Benares. They are sonorous and impressive, but they make no sense to the average reader, and so had to be followed by free paraphrases. Arnold knew almost no Pali, and was obliged to copy these passages from Hardy, who was not always accurate in his transliteration. In addition to repeating Hardy's mistakes, he added one or two of his own, mistakes which have been repeated in all editions since.

Of course Arnold drew on his own experience, as well as on books. His firsthand knowledge of India shows itself mainly in the local color passages: the descriptions of the jungle, the birth festivities, and the city of Kapilivastu. These passages gave the poem color and life, and are responsible for much of the poem's popularity. Indeed, if one were to try to sum up in a few words the secret of the success of *The Light of Asia*, it would be this: that Arnold was able to animate the rather dry Buddhist scriptures with color, warmth, and imaginative vigor such as no previous English writer had achieved.

Arnold's poem professes to be an exposition of Buddhism. How authentic a picture does it give? This is a question which it is presumptuous for most Westerners to try to answer, and any conclusions must be tentative. In the first place, there are as many variants of Buddhism as there are of Christianity, so that any account of its doctrines, unless it is encyclopaedic, must necessarily be selective. Arnold's poem, then, is a synthetic life of the Buddha, rather like the lives of Jesus that were so popular in the nineteenth century. His choice was determined, of course, by the material at hand, that is to say, the writings of Hardy, Beal, and a few others. Now most of the early Oriental scholars knew Buddhism in its older, southern form, as it exists in Burma, Ceylon, and Siam, rather than in its

later elaboration which is now found in China, Tibet and Japan. The differences are very deep. The southern school, known as the Hinayana (the lesser way) or the Theraveda (wisdom of the elders), is a more austere faith. It worships no supreme God and regards Buddha as in every respect a man, rather than the embodiment of some divine principle. His claim to fame was that he found salvation for himself and taught other men how to reach the goal also; however, this salvation must be found by individual effort. Each man must work out his own destiny, and will be rewarded in strict proportion to his merits. The other great school of Buddhism is the Mahayana (the greater way), which is a complicated and varied collection of many sects. Most of these agree, however, in regarding Buddha as a supernatural savior, somewhat like the Christ, an incarnation of a primordial Buddha-principle. Salvation may be achieved by pious devotion (bhakti) and by simple faith in the saving grace of the Buddha, in one manifestation or another. Since most men are weak, they may reach heaven by appropriating the superabundant merit accumulated by the saints. Whereas in Hinayana Buddhism the typical hero is the arhat, or lonely sage who wins release by the strength of his own contemplations, in the Mahayana the ideal figure is the Bodhisattva, the saint who has it in his power to enter nirvana, but who renounces this goal to help his struggling fellow creatures.

In all these points, Arnold follows the more primitive traditions, and nothing in *The Light of Asia* indicates that he knew much about the Mahayana in 1879. If he had, he would probably have rejected it as a corruption of the original gospel. He lived in a generation when European Biblical scholarship was dominated by what Schweitzer calls the quest of the historical Jesus, and he brought to Buddhism the same critical assumptions that prevailed in liberal Protestantism, especially the belief that the most primitive form of any doctrine is necessarily the truest and that later developments are perversions fostered by priests and theologians. Furthermore, the Mahayana contains doctrines which strongly resemble the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith and the Catholic doctrine of



the treasury of merit; and Arnold was not going to accept a Buddhist version of beliefs which he had already rejected in Christianity. He was not interested in orthodoxy; he was writing a "quest of the historical Buddha."

One of the chief stumbling blocks for the Westerner who approaches Buddhism for the first time is the doctrine of nirvana, the ultimate goal of man's quest for salvation. For a century Orientalists have debated the question: is nirvana annihilation, or is it a state of being richer and fuller than our own? The word means literally "extinction," as of a flame, but what is it that is extinguished? The soul does not die, for in Buddhist thought the soul cannot be said to exist, but passion and delusion do die, and as to what is left, the texts are silent. Western mystics sometimes speak in the same way: Dionysius the Areopagite insisted that God could be described only in negations, Eckhart spoke of the desert of God where no one is at home, and others have used such words as "death," "dark night," and "nothingness" to describe the mystical state. The function of such language is to suggest by paradox and negation the utter contrast between the beatific vision and ordinary experience. Seen from without, nirvana is nothing; from within it is everything.

The first Westerners to come into contact with Buddhism took this negative language quite literally. Emerson, for example, found Buddhism chilly and incompatible, and preferred the more congenial atmosphere of the Bhagavad Gita. Thoreau called Buddhism a gospel of negation, as did Burnouf and Hardy and Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire and most of the other Orientalists of the early and middle nineteenth century. As the century wore on, opinion began to shift. Max Müller, writing in 1872, suggested that the negative language of Buddhism was a later accretion from monkish orthodoxy (note the Protestant bias of this attitude) and held that when nirvana is described in positive terms we have the authentic tradition of the founder. In America, James Freeman Clark, a pioneer in comparative religion, also took the positive view, and in England T. W. Rhys Davids agreed with him.

Hinduism, of course, has always used more affirmative language. It does not speak of extinction (nirvana) but of liberation (moksha) in which the soul, free of the limitations of earthly life, merges with the life divine. The Orientalists, in changing their interpretation of Buddhism, were therefore assimilating Buddhist ideas to their Hindu equivalents, or at least assuming that a common truth underlay the divergences in language. If it could be shown that the two religions taught the same way of salvation, then the appeal of each would reinforce the other, and both would strengthen the belief, so characteristic of the age, in the essential unity of all religions. The positive interpretation of nirvana was the more attractive because it seemed closer to the spirit of Christian mysticism. Annihilation is not the ideal of Christianity, which prefers to speak of "life eternal" and "the peace which passeth all understanding." Nirvana, as interpreted by Müller and Clarke, could be represented as an equivalent of the Christian heaven, stripped of its crude mythological trappings, such as the golden streets and the pearly gates.

Arnold adopted this position and helped it to wider acceptance. In his preface to the poem he argued that "a third of mankind would never have been brought to believe in blank abstractions, or in Nothingness as the issue and crown of Being." In the poem itself, the chief discussion of nirvana comes in Book VIII:

As one who stands on yonder snowy horn  
 Having nought o'er him but the boundless blue,  
 So, these sins being slain, the man is come  
 NIRVANA'S verge unto.

Him the Gods envy from their lower seats;  
 Him the Three Worlds in ruin should not shake;  
 All life is lived for him, all deaths are dead;  
 Karma no more will make

New houses. Seeking nothing, he gains all;  
 Foregoing self, the Universe grows "I":  
 If any teach NIRVANA is to cease,  
 Say unto such they lie.

If any teach NIRVANA is to live,  
     Say unto such they err; not knowing this,  
 Nor what light shines beyond their broken lamps,  
     Nor lifeless, timeless bliss.

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*

... He is one with Life  
     Yet lives not. He is blest, ceasing to be.  
 OM, MANI PADME, OM! the Dewdrop slips  
     Into the shining sea!

Now this account may be a good statement of the essence of mysticism, but it lacks the authentic flavor of early Buddhism. The idea of the individual soul (the dewdrop) slipping into the shining sea of God sounds very like the Hindu concept of the union of the individual (atman) with the Universal soul (brahman); if a Buddhist chose to use this metaphor, he might be as likely to say that the shining sea slips into the dewdrop. The phrase "the Universe grows I" also strikes a false note, for in nirvana the very notion of any ego is meaningless. Arnold's word "bliss" sounds very like the Hindu concept of "ananda"; a Buddhist would be more inclined to say "absence of pain." If it is true that Buddhism and Hinduism teach the same message beneath their varying symbols, then Arnold did his best to make this kinship more obvious.

Another stumbling block for Westerners is that Buddhism denies the existence of the ego and holds that the temptation to relate our experience to a central self is the chief obstacle to salvation. So long as men cling to this illusion, our separate self-conscious existence perpetuates itself in this and successive lives. This is the doctrine of reincarnation, which is also found in Hinduism, but whereas Hindus often speak of the soul as a separate entity that inhabits successive bodies, in early Buddhism reincarnation is not conceived as the transmission of a *thing*. However, even if there is no soul, there are indisputably acts, and acts have consequences which must work themselves out. When a man dies, his accumulated potentialities for good and evil, his karma, pass to some new body. Cooma-

raswamy compares this process to a billiard ball which strikes another, causing it to move. No matter passes between the balls, but a certain amount of energy does. This energy in human beings is karma, and so long as we persist in thinking in self-centered terms we will identify the karma with an ego that is reborn.

How adequately does Arnold present all this? Of course, such matters are philosophical questions and could not be systematically treated in a narrative poem. However, he did understand and allude to the doctrine of the nonentity of the ego:

Say not "I am," "I was," or "I shall be,"  
Think not ye pass from house to house of flesh  
Like travellers . . .

He also understood karma, discussing the doctrine at some length, and—so it seems to an outsider—adequately.

The books say well, my Brothers! each man's life  
The outcome of his former living is;  
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes  
The bygone right breeds bliss.

That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields!  
The sesamum was sesamum, the corn  
Was corn. The Silence and the Darkness knew!  
So is man's fate born.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is the doctrine of the KARMA. Learn!  
Only when all the dross of sin is quit,  
Only when life dies like a white flame spent  
Death dies along with it.

Arnold also devotes ten pages of the sixth book to setting forth the Buddhist road to salvation, consisting of the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path. The emphasis of this exposition is ethical; he describes the course of right living appropriate to a householder, but makes little reference to the more rigorous discipline of meditation designed for the monk. This last is passed over quickly in one



page. Arnold was writing as a layman for laymen, and there was nothing wrong in leaving out such matters, except that by so doing he gave many readers an oversimplified idea of what Buddhism is about.

A third difficulty which the Occidental finds in Buddhism is its frank atheism. Buddha did not deny the existence of the gods; he simply denied that any of them was to be regarded as a first cause. On the contrary, he held that even the gods are subject to change and dissolution and need salvation quite as much as men. Later Buddhism, to be sure, did develop something like the Christian belief in God in the doctrine of Adi-Buddha, the primordial Buddha of whom the earthly Buddhas are corporeal manifestations, but of this development there is no trace in Arnold's poem. When questioned on the matter, he usually answered that Buddha had not denied the existence of a Supreme Being, but had merely declared Him unsearchable and not to be degraded by definition. Arnold himself did believe in a God, but his was an impersonal and vaguely defined deity who could be accommodated to almost any religion. Moreover, his faith emphasized individual striving; it may have been theistic in language, but its temper was humanistic in its insistence that God helps those who help themselves. Like many other liberals, he saw in Buddhism a religion which offered salvation, not as the reward of prayer and sacrifice, but as the fruit of strenuous endeavor and self-reliance.

After reflecting that even the gods, like man, are bound on the wheel of change, Siddhartha comes to a realization of the kinship of all living things:

Life runs its rounds of living, climbing up  
From mote and gnat, and worm, reptile and fish,  
Bird and shagged beast, man, demon, deva, God,  
To clod and mote again; so are we kin  
To all that is.

Buddhism taught from the very start the kinship of all living things and based on this belief its insistence on compassion as the chief

of all virtues. The reader of 1879, however, saw in these lines something more, for Arnold expressed himself in language that naturally suggested to any Victorian the Darwinian theory of evolution, then still a burning issue. Buddhism, of course, does not teach evolution in the sense that we know it, for it is interested only in the moral evolution of individuals, not in the physical evolution of species; nevertheless there is enough in common between the two systems so that many Victorians felt that Buddhism was more easily reconciled with Darwinism than Christianity, and that it was therefore the more scientific of the two religions.

Arnold was truest to the spirit of Buddhism when he made his hero protest in the name of humanity against the sacrifice of animals. Buddha's compassion for animals was bound to appeal to the humane instincts of the nineteenth century, and there must have been readers who reflected that Christianity, which denies animals a soul, was far behind Buddhism in this matter. Buddhism bases its position on theological as well as ethical considerations. As Arnold put it:

Nor, spake he, shall one wash his spirit clean  
By blood, nor gladden gods, being good, with blood;  
Nor bribe them, being evil; nay nor lay  
Upon the brow of innocent bound beasts  
One hair's weight of that answer all must give  
For all things done amiss or wrongfully.

The average reader might pass these lines without remark, but for the sceptic, or the religious man dissatisfied with Christian orthodoxy, the passage would seem to be a veiled reference to the vicarious atonement and the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb.

Buddha, like certain other Hindu reformers, was broadminded about caste distinctions and threw his order open to all men, even the untouchables. To whatever caste a man belonged, he could still reach perfection as a monk. Of course Buddha did not try to reform society, any more than did Saint Paul, for whom

there was neither bond nor free in Christ. Both Paul and Buddha pointed to a way of salvation beyond human society, but for those who stayed behind, the old inequalities still held. Nevertheless, wherever Buddhism has penetrated, the caste system is either moderated, as in Ceylon, or non-existent, as in Burma. Therefore Arnold did not distort the Buddhist message in making Siddhartha deny the validity of caste distinction: "There is no caste in Blood," he protests, "which runneth of one hue, nor caste in tears . . . Who doeth right deeds is twice-born, and who doeth ill deeds vile." Rightly or wrongly, the modern reader will inject into such words the liberal belief in social equality and be tempted to see Buddha as a typical western reformer, just as men have tried to impute democratic liberalism to Jesus because he preached the brotherhood of man. To do so is to weaken the force of the teaching of Buddha, who would have felt that for a man on the pathway of salvation to stop and tinker with the social structure would be like repairing a house about to be torn down. Still, there must have been many readers who found Buddhism appealing simply for this misconception and who admired Buddha as a social reformer, not realizing that the man they admired was the reflection of their own face.

It should now be obvious why Arnold's interpretation of Buddhism so appealed to his readers. He wrote for an age when the ancient faith was losing its hold on men. In an effort to find the spiritual comfort and ethical stability which Christianity had offered, men turned in large numbers to various alternative faiths: philosophic idealism, scientific naturalism, or the less respectable creeds, like Spiritualism and Theosophy. They did not, however, turn their backs on Zion without regret. For such persons, Buddhism offered a religion without a God, a psychology without a soul, an ethical system as noble as that of Christianity, and a path of salvation which needed no mediator, but which was open to anyone strong and wise enough to follow it. For those who respected science, Buddhism offered a religion based not on dogma or revelation but on the empirical facts of human

experience, and for those who demanded more than science could give, it held out the adventure and consolations of mysticism. All this Arnold presented to his readers, purged of those elements most likely to offend them and stated in terms most likely to appeal to them. Is it any wonder, then, that in an age of increasing skepticism, many men saw in Buddhism a way of remaining religious while maintaining their self-respect?

Though *The Light of Asia* was calculated to appeal to the man who was no longer satisfied with Christianity, it was not anti-Christian in tone; Arnold was too reverent for that. On the contrary, he believed that Buddhism, as he understood it, could be reconciled with a liberalized, nondogmatic Christianity. To prove his point, he tried all through the poem to assimilate Buddhist legends to a Christian pattern and to insert Biblical phrases into an Indian context. The material which he used abetted his purpose, for many of the legends of the Buddha strangely suggest those of the Gospels. For example, Siddhartha's birth at Lumbini was very like the Nativity as described by Saint Luke. In both accounts a savior of royal lineage is conceived miraculously and born while his mother is on a journey, in fulfillment of a prophecy, amid the rejoicing of all the hosts of heaven. Strangers come bearing gifts to the child, and an ancient sage pays him reverence, regretting that he will not live to see the boy grow to manhood. The Apocryphal Gospels provided still more parallels.

Usually Arnold was able to suggest a parallel between Christ and Buddha without tampering with the texts, but in some passages he underlined the resemblance by devices of his own. For instance, in Book V there is a description of Siddhartha carrying a sick lamb on his shoulder, while the mother ewe walks beside him; there is no such scene in the Buddhist scriptures, and the incident seems deliberately designed to suggest an analogy with the Good Shepherd. Many lines have verbal echoes of the Bible: "It is finished," "Bear no false witness," "That which ye sow ye reap," and many others.



These parallels escaped no one; they were pointed out by Oliver Wendell Holmes and by most of the other reviewers of the time. In fact, they contributed decisively to the poem's popularity. To understand how this might be, it should be remembered that from about 1860 to about 1920 a controversy raged among scholars as to the exact relationship between Buddhism and Christianity; indeed, the question is still unsettled. It was recognized that between the two religions there were striking similarities in myth, ritual, and even theology; what did they mean? Were they coincidences? Did one faith borrow from the other, and if so, which? If Christianity could not claim historical precedence, was its authority undermined or strengthened? These were not academic matters; thanks to the popularity of the new science of comparative religion, they were issues familiar to most educated men and to many half-educated, from the clergy on the one hand to the cultists on the other.

There is no room here to examine the historical links between Buddhism and Christianity, or to answer questions that have vexed scholars for a century. We must be content to see how the men of Arnold's generation reacted to the controversy and how it affected their judgment of his poem. The problem presented itself first to missionaries in the East, who were often shocked to find in Buddhism what seemed a burlesque of their most cherished beliefs. One of the first of these was Abbé Huc, a French priest who visited Tibet in the eighteen forties and was struck by the resemblances between the Lamaist ritual and that of the Roman Church. He imprudently voiced his surprise in several books, which were promptly put on the Index. Huc's theory was that these coincidences could be attributed to Catholic priests who visited Asia during the Middle Ages, especially John of Montecorvino. The theory was, of course, absurd: one can just as well imagine the Roman Church changing its liturgy to suit the taste of a strolling Buddhist.

Other men thought that the influence had been the other way, from Asia to the Mediterranean world. The French Oriental-

ist, Burnouf, was one of the first to suggest that Buddhist ideas had filtered from northwest India through Persia and Babylonia to Palestine, there to produce the mystical and ascetic cult of the Essenes, which in turn, it was thought, could have influenced Christianity. This convenient theory cropped up again and again throughout the century, and since next to nothing was known about the Essenes, it was hard to refute. Its chief proponent was a German, Dr. Rudolph Seydel, who wrote a long series of books mustering all the available evidence in an elaborate and scholarly manner. He professed to see traces of Oriental tradition in Matthew and Luke, but mainly in the latter. Schweitzer devoted several pages in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* to this theory, and concluded that Seydel had not distinguished sufficiently between Buddhism and native Jewish eschatology. The better known Orientalists, like Oldenburg, Max Müller, and T. W. Rhys Davids, all agreed that Oriental influences on Christianity were out of the question.

Seydel and his opponents wrote as scholars. For their work to reach the general public and affect the climate of opinion required the services of that much-abused but necessary figure, the popularizer. There is good evidence that by the time *The Light of Asia* was written, a large portion of the literate public had been exposed to simple discussions of Buddhist doctrine. One of the most popular of these was James Freeman Clarke's *Ten Great Religions*, which appeared in 1871 and enjoyed a wide circulation. Some of the conclusions in this book were anticipated in an article, also by Clarke, which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, entitled "Buddhism, the Protestantism of the East." Clarke's article prompted a second one in the following year by Lydia Maria Child, entitled "Resemblances Between the Buddhist and Roman Catholic Religions"; it dealt mainly with Lamaism and the Mahayana. During the seventies Arnold's kinsman by marriage, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, was frequently heard on lyceum platforms and in popular educational lectures, one of which was on the theme, "Buddhism." In England as

early as 1873 a series of lectures was given in Saint Paul's on "The Life of Buddha," and "A Comparison Between Buddhism and Christianity." Considering the surroundings, it is not surprising that the lecturer, Henry Parry Liddon, concluded that the Gospel surpassed the Dharma as full day does twilight, but to admit any comparison at all was a bold step for a churchman. The greatest popularizer of all, however, was Max Müller, who, in addition to being a scholar of the first rank, found time to write a series of interesting and readable books on comparative religion which did much to spread a knowledge of the subject among the general public. Thanks to such men, when Arnold came to publish his poem he found the ground already plowed for the seed he wished to sow.

As the scholar is followed by the popularizer, so the popularizer is followed by the crank. It is not always easy to tell him from the genuine student; often the distinction lies less in what he says than in the way he says it. Thus Burnouf's theory that the Jewish ascetic community of the Essenes was the connecting link between Buddhism and Christianity—a sober enough theory in itself—was adopted and repeated as dogma by two generations of irresponsible eccentrics, all of them eager to prove that Jesus was a Buddhist and that Christianity owed everything of value in it to the Orient. Such a theory opens up wonderful possibilities to men who like speculation and who do not insist too closely on the facts of history, so that where the legitimate Orientalists feared to tread there rushed in a swarm of Rosicrucians, Theosophists, vegetarians, phrenologists and Spiritualists. One of the first of these was Charles Christian Hennell, a merchant of London, whose *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity* went into several editions in England, Germany and America, greatly influencing his friend, George Eliot.

The Essene theory was not the only one by which the occultists tried to link Jesus and Buddha. Another school, taking advantage of the gap in our knowledge of the life of Jesus between his childhood and the start of the Galilean ministry, suggested

that those years were spent in the East, studying esoteric doctrine. One of the first to advance this theory was Louis Jacolliot, whose *La Bible dans l'Inde* was published in 1869 and translated into English in the following year. Jacolliot argued that Jesus studied in the Orient as a young man and that the cult of Christ was an adaptation of the worship of Krishna. The book attracted little serious attention, but it did influence a few occultists, like Mme. Blavatsky.

This entire complex of ideas became inevitably associated with the type of biblical criticism represented by Bruno Bauer, the author of a long series of volumes appearing between 1840 and 1880, who treated the Gospels frankly as myths and proclaimed that the historical Jesus never existed, but was the product of the religious traditions and hopes of the east Mediterranean culture. Bauer found lesser imitators who spread his ideas among the general public, both in England and America. One such was Felix L. Oswald, who boldly identified the myths of Christ, Buddha and Krishna and rejected them all bodily in the name of secular humanism. For these people, to prove that Christianity was derived from Buddhism was a way of undermining its authority. There were others who were less bitter in their attitude toward Christianity but who were forced to reject it nonetheless, not because they were incapable of reverence, but because they were disappointed in a faith that seemed to have become rigid, dogmatic and barren. Rebels against a creed that claimed absolute and exclusive validity, they turned to Buddhism, which is naturally tolerant, or else they rejected religion altogether. These were the people for whom Christianity seemed too parochial, too confining, and to them *The Light of Asia* was bound to appeal strongly.

While the scholars wrangled over the historical kinship of Buddhism and Christianity, there were others who saw that the real question was their spiritual kinship. If it could be shown that the spiritual insights of Buddha were unworthy of the attention of a Christian, then questions of historical precedent would



be irrelevant. Thus, while the students of comparative religion were at work trying to undermine the claims of Christianity to historical uniqueness, the Christian apologists were marshalling their defense on philosophical, ethical and theological grounds. The first and simplest defense was merely to reject Buddhism completely. Thus Hardy, to whom a generation of Orientalists owed a debt, never wavered in his conviction of the superior beauty, morality, nobility and general credibility of Wesleyan Methodism. However, as knowledge of the Orient spread, it was necessary to resort to a more sophisticated defense. One of the commonest tactics was to approach Buddhism with every show of scholarly impartiality, professing to let the texts speak for themselves. A few points would be conceded as evidence of good will, and tribute would be paid to the character of Gautama, or to the ethical nobility of his teaching. Then a judgment would be passed on the respective merits of the two religions, but the standards of judgment were always Christian. For example, Monier Williams, Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, decided that Buddhism could not be considered a religion since it had no belief in a Supreme Being, and a writer in the *Reformed Quarterly Review* of 1889 expressed a regret that so sweet a soul as Buddha lacked the joys of a belief in God, sin, salvation, and eternal life. A standard criticism was to call Buddhism "negative," or "pessimistic," or "world-denying," and Christianity "positive," "hopeful," or "world-affirming," forgetting that the Buddha offered his message to man as a hope and a consolation, not as a gospel of despair. The assumption always was that if something could be shown to be "pessimistic" it was for that reason false. The optimism of the day even tempted some into imagining that Buddhism, with its profound insight into evil and suffering, had been made obsolete by the march of historical progress. One critic, named Samuel Kellogg, even suggested that Buddhism would not have arisen if ancient India had enjoyed "the various public philanthropies which do so much to mitigate the evils of poverty

in Christian lands." Kellogg forgot that the founder of Buddhism was born in a palace.

As the controversy progressed, the Christian apologists conceded more and more to the Orient, a change which reflected the steady triumph of the liberal view in theological circles. In response to the new climate of opinion, the Christian apologists offered a new defense, which made its appearance in the sixties and seventies and became fashionable in the eighties and nineties. This was to admit a high degree of excellence in Buddhism, but to reserve loyalty to Christianity as the more perfect revelation of the truth which Buddha foreshadowed. This was, of course, the attitude which orthodox Christianity had always held towards Judaism. The Mosaic law was regarded as binding in its time, but superseded by the new dispensation of grace under Jesus Christ. The liberals took this idea and extended it from Judaism to all religions older than Christianity, grouping them under the patronizing name of "ethnic religions," to suggest that they were valid only for one people or nation.

Liddon's lectures in Saint Paul's, already alluded to, took this line of argument. So did an article which appeared in the *Catholic Quarterly Review* for 1888, which employed the Catholic distinction between natural and infused virtue to argue that there might be much of real value in Buddhism, even though it lacked the transcendental excellence of Christianity. Archibald Scott, in the Croall Lectures for 1889 in Edinburgh, argued that Buddhism had been a vehicle of revelation in the past, but that it was now exhausted, whereas Christianity was still capable of being the bearer of new light. This argument, while it might seem to be a defense of Christianity, was really an admission that other religions were to be admitted on the same footing with it, since it implied that religious knowledge was a matter of cumulative growth to which different faiths would contribute. Another implication, usually left unexpressed, was that Christianity itself might be superseded by some new revelation. With this admission,

the fully developed liberal view triumphed. Even divine revelation has been obliged to conform itself to the law of historical progress.

In the nineties a new movement appeared in religious circles which took its place beside the older liberalism, though not displacing it. This was a widespread interest in mysticism. Genuine mystics were as rare as ever, but there was a sudden spate of books which explored the subject from every point of view, devotional, philosophical, historical and psychological. Some of the better known studies were those of Récéjac, Poulain, Inge, Leuba, James, von Hügel, Jones and Underhill. The movement was anti-dogmatic, and to that extent liberal, but it was in open revolt against the rationalism and scientific determinism of the previous decades. These writers were sympathetic to mysticism in whatever form it appeared, for they knew that all mystics have visited the same country, although in their stammering attempts to describe it they may use different languages. Thus they were prepared to look favorably on Buddhism and Hinduism and to receive gladly the books which began to appear in the early twentieth century on yoga, Zen, and other forms of Oriental contemplation. This trend has been continued in recent years by such works as Rudolph Otto's *Mysticism East and West*, which seeks to show the oneness of all mystical experience.

It is clear that *The Light of Asia* could hardly have been better timed. For several decades the controversy over the relative merits of Buddhism and Christianity had been developing, and just as that quarrel came to a head, Arnold's poem appeared. Coming when it did, it seemed to many people the climactic utterance of the whole debate. Its literary charm and human appeal gave it a circulation far wider than any other book on Buddhism, thus publicizing still further questions that had previously been of interest chiefly to specialists. So long as the controversy raged, the poem found readers, and when after twenty or thirty years of debate it seemed that everything had been said on the subject that could reasonably be said, the controversy died down, and other issues caught the public fancy. When this

happened, *The Light of Asia* ceased to be a best-seller, and its popularity has waned steadily since. We cannot understand the poem and why it aroused both such passionate opposition and eager support, except in view of this debate.

Arnold was familiar, of course, with the issues raised by the many similarities between Buddhism and Christianity, for he emphasized these resemblances and even invented a few. He was wise enough to leave untouched the delicate question of whether Christianity had actually borrowed anything from the older religion, and not a line in all his collected writings touches this issue directly. He did not hide the resemblances, but he offered no explanation for them, and the reader was free to make up his mind as to how they could have arisen. Had Arnold taken sides, he would have alienated many readers, no matter which side he chose. On the other hand, he left no doubt as to what he considered to be the relative merits of the two faiths. Buddha he always presented as a genuine savior, and the bearer of an authentic message of salvation; as such he was not a rival to Jesus of Nazareth, but a worthy second. From this position Arnold never wavered, and when years later he wrote a poem on the life of Jesus, he reaffirmed it. If Buddha was the dawn, Jesus was the day; if one was the light of Asia, the other was the light of the world.

The reviews that greeted Arnold's poem leave no doubt as to the impression it made on its readers. Everyone, friend and foe alike, saw that Arnold's appraisal of Buddhism was by implication also an appraisal of Christianity, and the more orthodox the reviewer, the more alarmed he was. Samuel Kellogg, who has already been mentioned, was stirred to write a whole book to combat the Buddhist menace. The very first page shows who, in Mr. Kellogg's mind, was the prime instigator of the new and dangerous threat to Christianity:

The interest that has been taken of late in Buddhism by a large number of intelligent people in various Christian countries



is one of the most peculiar and suggestive religious phenomena of our day. In the United States this interest has prevailed for a considerable time among a somewhat restricted number of persons who have known or thought that they knew something of Buddhism; but since 1879, through the publication of Mr. Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, the popularity of the subject has in a very marked degree increased. Many who would have been repelled by any formal, drily philosophical treatise upon Buddhism, have been attracted to it by the undoubted charm of Mr. Arnold's verse. The issue of cheap editions of this poem, selling for only a few cents, has helped in the same direction, as this has brought the poem, and with it the subject, to the attention of a large number of persons not yet sufficiently interested in Buddhism to have cared to pay much more.

The harshest critic of all was William Cleaver Wilkinson, who wrote a fiercely vituperative little book, already mentioned, entitled *Edwin Arnold as Poetizer and Paganizer*, to prove that Arnold was incompetent as a poet, and, in matters of religion, an apostle of the Antichrist. For all his venom, however, he could not deny that the poem was immensely popular and seemed to have great influence:

The publication of Mr. Arnold's work happened to coincide in time with a singular development, both in America and in Europe, of popular curiosity and interest concerning ethnic religions, especially concerning Buddhism. The "Light of Asia" was well adapted to hit this transient whim of Occidental taste. So I account, in part, for the instantaneous American popularity of the poem. At any rate, Mr. Arnold has, no doubt, whether by merit or by fortune, been, beyond any other writer, the means of widening the American audience prepared to entertain with favor the pretension of Buddha and his teachings.

The effect is very observable. There has entered the general mind an unconfessed, a half unconscious, but a most shrewdly penetrative, misgiving that perhaps, after all, Christianity has not of right quite the exclusive claim that it was previously

supposed to possess, upon the attention and reverence of mankind. A letting up of the sense of obligation, on the part of Christians, to Christianize the world, has followed. Nay, the individual Christian conscience has, if I mistake not, been disposed to wear more lightly its own yoke of exclusive loyalty to Jesus.

It is perhaps unfair to quote so much from Arnold's enemies, but their criticisms are a better indication of the popularity of *The Light of Asia* than the more friendly reviews. Hostile criticism of this sort followed Arnold all his life, but he wisely made no reply, unless *The Light of the World* can be considered one. In his essays he continued to write of Buddhism without ever allowing himself to be put on the defensive, for the popularity of his poem was its own best defense. Certainly he never regarded his admiration of Buddhism as involving any disloyalty to Christianity; it would never have occurred to him that the truth could be diminished by being shared.

## CHAPTER VII

# THE PATRON SAINT OF BUDDHISM

Once *The Light of Asia* was published, recognition came to Arnold from all quarters. In 1879 he was elected a resident member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and in December of the same year the King of Siam acknowledged his services to Buddhism by appointing him an officer of the Order of the White Elephant. It seems that Arnold had taken care to bring the poem to the attention of His Majesty by sending him a copy through the Siamese minister in London. The royal letter which accompanied the award implied that Arnold's interpretation of Buddhism was not strictly orthodox, but expressed gratitude for "having made a European Buddhist speak beautifully in the most widespread language of the world."

Such was the success of *The Light of Asia* during the fall of 1879 that Arnold felt justified in taking a two months' vacation in Egypt that winter, accompanied by Fanny, Katharine, and Julian. On this trip Arnold, for the first time since the exciting days of the Mutiny, found himself in danger of his life. The party left London on December 8, 1879, for Genoa, where they embarked on the S.S. *Asia* for Alexandria. Reaching Cairo on Christmas day, they put up at the Hôtel du Nil. Egypt is delightful in the winter, and the Arnolds spent two happy weeks in Cairo exploring the bazaars and wandering around the narrow streets of the old quarter where an atmosphere like that of the Arabian Nights still lingered. It was Arnold's purpose to hire a river boat, or *dahabeah*, with a crew for a trip up the Nile as far as the first cataract, or perhaps even to the second; so while the family went sightseeing, he made arrangements for the trip among the boat owners on the river front. It was late in the season, and the best craft were already engaged; so Arnold had to be content with the *Bedouin*, an ancient boat, but not uncomfortable

despite its age. It was a large, flat-bottomed vessel of wide beam, with a main-mast, a short mizzen, and a lateen sail. There were a galley amidships, two cabins on either side of a passageway, and another stateroom in the rear. The roof of these cabins formed an upper deck, which was covered with awnings. Stores of all sorts were put aboard, not forgetting guns and ammunition for Julian, and sketching materials for Mrs. Arnold.

While these preparations were under way, Arnold fell in with his friend, the traveler and Arabic scholar Richard Burton. Arnold broached to him his plan for making a poetical version of the "Ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah." Burton encouraged him in the project, and was able to give Arnold the benefit of his own learning. He was also planning a book—his famous translation of the *Arabian Nights*—and gave his friend a portion of the manuscript to read. Arnold read it with care, including the "anthropological footnote" dealing with the sexual practices of the East, which made the book notorious. Arnold thought they should be left out, but Burton was stubborn and went ahead with his plans for a limited edition, to be privately published. Later he regretted his decision and admitted as much to Arnold.

By January 10 the party was under way, despite the ominous predictions of Burton, who claimed psychic powers and had strange premonitions of evil. The days slipped lazily by as the boat pushed steadily upstream, past Coptic and Arab villages and a changing panorama of sunburnt hills and desert. Fanny sketched; Julian amused himself by hunting. At nightfall the *Bedouin* would tie up along the bank while the company placidly ate their evening meal. In this idyllic way the time passed with no mishaps, except when the captain, Reis Achmet, fell ill and had to be nursed by Mrs. Arnold with pills and ointment. Then on January 2, 1880, disaster struck. The *Bedouin* had started early in the morning with a fresh breeze. Fanny, Julian, and Katharine were still in their cabins, and Arnold himself was on deck with the captain. Suddenly a blast of wind lashed across from the desert and threw the boat over on its side. She righted for a moment, rocked back,



and then under a second blast capsized outright. In the confusion one of the crew—the cook—was drowned, despite Arnold's attempt to save him, but Fanny and Julian made the deck safely before the ship went over, while Katharine had the presence of mind to climb out her cabin window. The rest of the crew clambered back on the overturned hull, and Julian dragged the old Arab captain out of the water.

The ship was sinking fast under the weight of so many men, and the next problem was to set free the skiff so that the women at least could get safely to shore. The knot that held it, however, was far under the water, and the only knife at hand was a one-blade penknife. With this poor instrument, which constantly threatened to snap, Arnold cut the manila cable, while the crew sat uselessly by, wailing. Once the boat was loose, the crew scrambled to get in, and Arnold had to check them by knocking them into the water. The ladies were put on board with a boy, a sick Arab, and three good sailors. Relieved of their weight, the *dahabeah* now rode higher in the water and so drifted downstream until she hit the bank two miles below.

The party was reunited somehow and took stock of its situation. Katharine was still in her nightgown, and there was one set of slippers among the four. The nearest village was six miles away, and all their cash and possessions had gone down on the *Bedouin*. Fortunately the villagers were generous and hospitable, offering food, shelter, and clothing to the castaways; messengers were sent to Girgeh, where a party of English and American friends helped them back to Cairo. Arnold returned wearing Arab clothes and the shoes of a Dutch traveller; the ladies also borrowed clothing. Julian, undaunted by his ducking, went on with the original plan to explore the Nile and finished the trip in the company of his friends.

During 1884 and 1885 the popularity of *The Light of Asia* was at its height. In the latter year alone, Trübner's published at least eight editions of the poem, including a de luxe illustrated quarto edition, while in America the pirated and au-

thorized editions alike were still selling rapidly. Arnold found himself with a world-wide reputation as a kind of patron saint of Buddhism. In the East, where Buddhists had become accustomed to the misunderstanding and contempt of Christians, he was hailed as a champion arisen from the ranks of the enemy. Invitations began to pour in upon him from British and Orientals alike in India, Burma, Ceylon, and Siam, to visit the East once more. Arnold had wanted for a long time to go back to India and allowed himself to be easily persuaded. In the autumn of 1885 he set out with Fanny and Katharine.

This trip was very different from the one taken by the young schoolmaster in 1857. Instead of the rocking side-wheeler, their ship was the 5,000 ton P. & O. liner *Paramatta*; instead of troops moving to the front the passengers were largely civil engineers, administrators, high-ranking officers, and a number of women, children, and nurses; and in the intervening years the Suez Canal had been built, so that the trip was by water the whole way. By the second week in November they were sailing down the Red Sea, past the arid waste of Aden, and into the Indian Ocean. Arnold's imperialist instincts were stirred by the rivalry of other European powers that threatened British interests in this part of the world, and he lost no time in reminding the readers of the *Telegraph* that Italy, France, and Germany were even then busy carving out for themselves an East African Empire that threatened the security of Aden and of England's line of communication to India. It was his hope that Australia, which had helped England conquer the Sudan, would plant a colony on the west shore of the Red Sea or in Somaliland, which would "give expansion and political dignity to the Colony," and be "of inestimable value to the Empire at large."

Arnold found Bombay much changed from the city he had known thirty years before. The ramparts were gone, with other landmarks, but in their place had risen new public buildings, such as the railway station, clock tower, and Courts of Justice, with their towers and cupolas that now give Bombay its restless

and gaudy skyline. Arnold was much impressed by these structures, "conceived for the most part with a happy inspiration, which blends the Gothic and Indian schools of architecture." Behind the façade of modern improvements, however, India pursued its steaming, crowded way of life as it had for millenniums, and Arnold noted with satisfaction all the familiar scenes of street life which he had known in his youth. Meanwhile he was feted eagerly by Hindus, Parsis, and British alike. It was a time when upper class Indians were doing their best to assume British ways of dress and behavior, and Arnold noted with satisfaction the freedom with which Indians and British had begun to mingle socially, a freedom which he regarded as a "signal token of the increasing friendship arising between the races." Sometimes this blending of cultures led to grotesque results, like the architecture of the Courts of Justice and the railway station, but to Arnold it was all pure gain, and he cited with approval the example of a Parsi school where the girl students, in token of their eagerness to be properly Anglicized, sang "Home Sweet Home" in Gujerati and "proudly exhibited their achievements in sewing, knitting, and crochet-work."

After a week spent sightseeing around Bombay, so that the women might "get their feathers straight," all three set off for Arnold's old haunts, Poona and the highlands of Maharashtra. As the train made its way into town amid clouds of what Arnold charitably called the "white, fragrant Indian dust," they found the changes there no less striking than in Bombay. The college had burned and been rebuilt, a large suburban tract of houses and gardens had sprung up in the fields where Arnold had once shot quail, and even the spot where he had once lived could not be located except after a long search. The gatekeeper of the college was still there, however, and with his help a few old-timers were gathered who remembered the former principal. Some of his old pupils were still in Poona, and one of them made the Arnolds welcome with a gala festival, complete with nautch dancers. Arnold recited one of his poems, and the whole company

then sat down to enjoy a "sataric drama" in twenty-six acts. The Arnolds left in the middle of the twelfth act to catch an early train back to Bombay.

There the round of parties continued. December was saddened for the Arnolds, however, by the death of Lester's little son at the age of four months. A poem, entitled "To Wilfrid H. Arnold," was the poet's tribute to his grandson. Leaving Bombay at last, they made their way north by train into Gujerat and Rajputana, where they were guests of a dazzling succession of princes and princelings. The stay at each native state was much like all the rest, with the usual rounds of parties, welcoming ceremonies, and royal interviews. At most of these affairs Arnold could be persuaded to recite a poem or two of his own. In this way they visited Baroda, Bhaunagar (in Kathiawar), Ahmedabad, Jaipur, and Alwar.

The three reached Delhi in mid-January, where Sir Frederick Roberts, commander in chief of the Indian Army, bade them welcome to the great practice maneuvers about to be held. The city was full of princes and their retinues, army officers and their wives, and regiments from one end of the peninsula to the other. Engagements in Ceylon made it impossible for Arnold to linger long in Delhi, but he did not fail to pay a visit to Panipat, the plain fifty miles north of the city, where so many of the most crucial battles of India's history have been fought, beginning with the mythical combat in the *Mahabharata*, at which Lord Krishna delivered the sacred verses of the Gita. No one knew much about the place, and even at the village itself neither the local magnate, a toothless old Moslem, nor the one Brahmin knew of Arjuna and his exploits. While at Delhi Arnold also met Lionel Tennyson, the son of the laureate, and his wife. Tennyson had already suffered one bout of fever in Assam and fell ill again of a chill contracted while watching a military parade in a cold rain; Arnold accordingly had the duty of escorting Mrs. Tennyson to table at the various dinner parties which they attended in



Delhi. No one realized at the time that Tennyson was fatally ill and was to die on the return trip to England.

Agra has been described so often that Arnold's letters to the *Telegraph* could do little more than repeat what every other traveller had written about the Taj Mahal, the Fort, the Jama Masjid, and Fathepur Sikhri. However, the city had an especial interest for him because of its associations with Frederic Cairns Hubbard, his school friend, who had met his death there during the Mutiny. One of Hubbard's former students showed Arnold the very spot where his friend had been shot down and the grave where his body lay.

Benares, the holy city of Hinduism, was the next stop, and the Arnolds saw it to best advantage from the river, where the temples crowd the banks and the ghats press down to the water's edge. The real appeal of Benares for Arnold, however, was not as a Hindu place of pilgrimage, but as a former center of Buddhism and the spot where the Buddha preached his first sermon after his enlightenment. Sitting by the stupa at Sarnath, on the site of the Deer Park, surrounded by the ruins of the shrines and memorials of the Light of Asia, it seemed to him that "more consecrated ground could hardly anywhere be found."

The chief shrine of all the Buddhist world is, of course, Buddh Gaya, with its tree marking the spot where Gautama Buddha achieved enlightenment. Some attempt had been made by the Burmese to restore the temple, and the authorities in Calcutta had also spent some money there, but in 1885 the shrine with its soaring tower was still sadly dilapidated and visited by Hindu pilgrims only. A Brahmin was in charge, and Mahrattas were doing puja to Shiva. Nevertheless, this was the heart of Buddhism, and Arnold approached it with real reverence. The sacred tree—or rather a scion of it—still stood in the compound, and Arnold asked the Brahmin if he might pick a few leaves. "Pluck as many as you like, Sahib," was the answer; "it is nought to us." Ashamed of such indifference and rather wishing that his request had been resented, Arnold took the cluster of dark, glossy leaves which the

priest picked, and pressed them as a gift to the Buddhists of Ceylon, having first written upon them a sacred formula in Sanskrit.

The third week of January found Arnold in Calcutta, the second largest city of the Empire, as guest of the Viceroy. Lord Dufferin, who had just come to India from Canada, where he had been Governor-General, was staying at his country villa at Barrackpore, a few miles north of the city. In appearance the two men resembled each other so closely that one wit labeled them the "Dromios of Barrackpore" and, accosting them with a grave face, asked Arnold whether he did not find India trying after the cold of Canada, and whether Dufferin did not feel that the authorship of *The Light of Asia* weighed on his Christian conscience. Among other notables in Calcutta were the members of the Legislative Council, the Tagore family, Mazoomdar of the Brahmo Samaj, and Wajed Ali, the exiled Prince of Oudh. Arnold met them all, but in spite of the brilliant society, he did not like the capital, which he found dirty, poverty-stricken, and unlovely. He was much happier in Madras, and in his letters home he found the kindest possible words for the sweltering Tamil metropolis.

Arnold's triumphal progress reached its climax in Ceylon, a Buddhist country, where the clergy turned out in crowds to honor him and hear him speak. The principal ceremonies were at Panadura, on the west coast, where he was obliged to listen to an interminable address hailing him as a scholar who had "eclipsed the fame of other learned men as a mountain of diamond would the luster of mountains of other precious stones." After the fulsome eulogies were over, Arnold had an interview of two hours with Sri Weligama, the chief priest of Singhalese Buddhism, while a crowd of monks gazed through the windows. That prelate was much interested in what Arnold had to tell him about the condition of the Holy Places of Buddhism. Arnold answered his questions in detail, presenting him with some of the pipal leaves which he had brought from Buddh Gaya and a little carved

stupa of stone which he had picked up from the ruins. He also suggested to his hosts that the time had come for the Holy Places to be returned to Buddhist custody, as soon as arrangements could be made with the Hindu priest then in possession.

From Panadura the party returned to Colombo, where the local Theosophists gave him a similar reception at Vidyodaya College. The usual eulogies were pronounced, thanking Arnold for "shedding a moonlight luster over the dhamma." He spoke his thanks in return, affirming his belief that the wisdom of Buddhism was not in conflict with the truths of other religions. Among those present were Colonel Olcott and Charles W. Leadbeater, names well known in Theosophical circles. Olcott was a follower of Mme. Blavatsky and the first American to become a professing Buddhist; Leadbeater later seceded from the movement and set himself up as Bishop of a cult called the Liberal Catholic Church.

The last stop in Ceylon was Kandy, the former capital of the Singhalese kings. Arnold was delighted with the spot, its temperate climate and circling mountains. As usual, the local Buddhists outdid themselves to honor him and showed themselves especially interested in what he had to say about the temple at Buddh Gaya. A visit to the Temple of the Tooth and an evening call on the Governor completed the stay. The three travelers left Ceylon for India on the little ship *Madura*, which crossed the Gulf of Manar to Tuticorin. The last gift of the Singhalese was a begging bowl and yellow robe such as priests carry. The trip home was uneventful, and by summer, Arnold was back in Fleet Street once again.

The most solid fruit of this trip was Arnold's proposal, first made at the temple in Panadura, that the Buddh Gaya property be returned to Buddhist hands. The priests eagerly welcomed the idea and begged Arnold to lay it before the proper governmental authorities. This he did, approaching in turn the Governor of Ceylon, the Governor of Madras, the Indian Secretary of State, and the Viceroy himself. All professed themselves friendly to the

scheme, so long as it could be accomplished cheaply and without offending the Hindus. There lay the hitch. Arnold was convinced that the Hindu Mahant at the shrine could be induced to surrender his possession if only he were approached soon enough and with a sufficiently generous gift, but while the government deliberated, opposition at Gaya stiffened, the Mahant kept raising his price, and finally refused to part with the custody of the shrine under any terms.

By this time, however, the Buddhists, thoroughly aroused after centuries of indifference, organized a society to further their plans. This was the Maha-Bodhi Society, founded in 1891 by a Singhalese named Dharmapala. Dharmapala paid a visit to Gaya, inspired directly by reading Arnold's account of the place, and there conceived the idea of a great missionary organization that would revive Buddhism in the land of its origin and restore the Holy Places to their rightful owners. The scheme caught on at once, thanks largely to Arnold's propaganda for the cause, and an imposing list of officers was drawn up, including the Grand Lama of Tibet, the Tathanaibang of Burma, a Prince of the Siamese royal house, and some of the chief ecclesiastics of Japan and Ceylon. Arnold's name appeared as one of the English representatives. A journal was inaugurated, the first number appearing in May, 1892, and plans were made to found a Buddhist college at Gaya that would be the headquarters of an order of Bikkhus.

Arnold continued active in the cause for several years. In November, 1889, during his first visit to Japan, he lectured to a group of priests on the Holy Places and was able to arouse enough interest in his audience so that a society was formed to promote interest in Gaya among Japanese Buddhists. In August of 1892, on his second visit, he made a similar address in which he declared that he would gladly sacrifice his life, if need be, in so great a cause. So successful was his pleading that the Society set about making plans to buy land near the temple and to send a party of Japanese monks to Gaya. The following year Arnold wrote a leader for his paper entitled "East and West—



A Splendid Opportunity," telling the story of the temple and of the efforts to recover it for the Buddhists. The article received further circulation by being reprinted in *East and West* and in the *Journal of the Maha-Bodhi Society*.

In May, 1894, Dharmapala tried to install in the upper chamber of the temple a statue that had been presented for the purpose by the Japanese. It was supposed to be seven centuries old and a priceless work of art. The Mahant at first seemed to give consent, but when the day came for the installation, Mr. Dharmapala found himself and his statue forcibly ejected from the premises. He brought suit before the District Magistrate, who decided in favor of the Buddhists in July of that year, but the decision was reversed by the High Court of Calcutta after a lawsuit in which, it was said, the Mahant spent a million rupees. Matters had reached such a point that Arnold was tempted to go to Gaya himself to help straighten out the tangle. He never made the trip, but he did send the Mahant a friendly letter in Hindi, together with a copy of his translation of the Gita, as a proof of his good will toward Hinduism. Still, nothing came of the negotiations, and Dharmapala had to be content with enshrining his statue in the Buddhist rest house near by. Trouble broke out again in 1895 when the Buddhists tried to secure title to the village near which the temple stood. The Mahant, alarmed, again used all his influence to evict his unwelcome neighbors and persuaded the government to order Dharmapala to remove his statue from the rest house, or else suffer it to be confiscated. At the last moment the order was withdrawn.

The quarrel dragged on in this way for a decade or more, and in 1900 Dharmapala, who no doubt recalled Arnold's offer to give his life in the cause, called on the poet for further help. Arnold, however, was too sick. He had been paralyzed for some three years and was blind as well; all he could do was to wish Dharmapala luck. So ended his work for the Maha-Bodhi Society, with the temple still in Hindu custody, where it remained until the spring of 1953. It would be easy to exaggerate Arnold's part

in finally bringing the property back into Buddhist hands, yet it does seem fair to say that the idea was originally his. It was no small achievement to arouse sympathy in the West for the Buddhist religion, but it was an even more remarkable feat that he should have aroused the Buddhist world itself to a realization of its own inheritance.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A KNIGHT OF ASIA: 1880-1889

For some years Arnold had been exploiting Indian literature for all it was worth; now he began to turn to the Islamic world for inspiration. Partly because of his experiences in Egypt, and partly because of his interest in the Eastern question, he spent much of his spare time in the seventies and eighties studying the Islamic languages—Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. The fruits of this labor were four books: the *Turkish Grammar*, which we have already mentioned, *Pearls of the Faith* (1883), *With Sa'di in the Garden* (1888), and *The Gulistan* (1899).

*Pearls of the Faith* is cast in a very different form from *The Light of Asia*. As Arnold explained in the preface, it is the custom for pious Moslems to use a rosary of three strings of thirty-three beads each, representing the ninety-nine names or epithets of God as found in the Koran. The book, accordingly, is divided into ninety-nine sections, each prefixed with the corresponding Arabic name and containing a poem illustrative of the divine virtue which the name celebrates. The poem may be a paraphrase of an Arab legend, or a short moral discourse, or simply a metrical version of a section of the Koran. In these translations Arnold achieved a freedom of verse structure that went far beyond anything he had previously done and often beyond what his readers were willing to accept. A public accustomed to the smooth pentameters of *The Light of Asia* imagined that in *Pearls of the Faith* Arnold had tried the same sort of verse and failed. They did not realize that the rough lines were an attempt to reproduce the style of the Koran itself, which is strongly rhythmical, marked by irregular rhymes and assonance. The experiment was interesting, and it is a pity that Arnold did not explore the technique further.

The source of most of the ninety-nine poems was George Sale's translation of the Koran, made in 1734. This version, free though it is, has been republished nine times in two centuries and remains one of the chief sources from which English readers gain their first knowledge of the Bible of Islam. The footnotes are full of anecdotes and miscellaneous scraps of information on which Arnold drew freely. For the rest, he relied on his own insight into Islam which he had gained in the East and on his characteristic sympathy with all forms of religious expression. Unfortunately, good will is no substitute for careful scholarship, as the critics were quick to point out. Lane-Poole, for example, reviewed the book in *The Academy* in an article full of the contempt of the professional Orientalist for an amateur. In addition to pointing out a number of purely philological slips, he complained that Arnold's version of Islam was not orthodox and that it hid the rugged simplicity of the Koran with ideas from Indian and Persian mysticism. *The Critic* was kinder. Its reviewer, while recognizing that Arnold had given an idealized picture of Islam, felt that he had done so "with great skill and the truest poetic feeling, in language that it would be hard to match."

One poem of the ninety-nine did achieve real popular success. This was the sixtieth, entitled "The Restorer," which became well known as "After Death in Arabia," and alternatively by its first line, "He who died at Azan." In it an unnamed Arab addresses his friends after death to tell them that he is not really dead and that he will meet them in Paradise. Like "She and He," which is also an affirmation of the immortality of the soul, this poem was published as an appendix to *The Light of Asia* in many of the American editions and in this form enjoyed a wide circulation. It even achieved the honor of being plagiarized and was published by an American lady in a magazine over her name. It also won the praise of so discriminating a critic as Oliver Wendell Holmes, who copied it into his scrapbook and wrote the author a letter of compliment.



The second of Arnold's Islamic poems was an adaptation of the *Bostan* of the Persian poet, Sa'di, which appeared in 1888. Like his other writings, it was shrewdly timed, for Persian poetry had come into vogue in the eighties, largely because of the immense and increasing popularity of Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyam. The Middle East had provided the setting for Oriental tales ever since the eighteenth century, but there was something about the closing years of the Victorian era that seemed especially akin to the mood of Persian literature, with its technical sophistication and its fascinating blend of worldliness and mysticism. The *Bostan* is a didactic poem in ten chapters, dealing with religious and metaphysical subjects. Arnold did not venture to translate it all but made use of a device which he was to employ again in *Lotus and Jewel*: choice excerpts were translated and placed in a new frame of Arnold's own devising. The method is that of a jeweler who takes gems from an old piece of jewelry to mount them in a more fashionable setting. The scene is laid in the garden of the Taj Mahal, where an Englishman discourses with an aged Moslem scholar about Sa'di and his poem, while two dancing girls listen and make the night gay with their songs. The bulk of the poem is Arnold's own, including a purple passage describing the Taj and its garden; the translations from Sa'di are marked in italics, and are all taken from the fourth book, dealing with love. Arnold's poetic version is based largely on the prose translation of Captain H. Wilberforce Clarke. The Omar Khayyam stanza is occasionally used, but with none of Fitzgerald's pointed terseness, for Arnold weakened his verses by the unrestrained use of enjambement, a practice which destroyed the epigrammatic effect of which the stanza is capable.

The last of the Islamic poems appeared only five years before Arnold died: a translation of the *Gulistan*, or "Rose Garden," also by Sa'di. The *Gulistan* is the first Persian text that the average Western reader meets, and there have been scores of translations into Western languages, one of the better ones being by Arnold's friend, Burton. Arnold's version is therefore rather a work of

supererogation. It resembles his earlier translation of the *Hitopadesha* in its mixture of alternating verse and prose, wisdom and humor. But let us confess it: the book was a failure; it does not hold the attention as do most of his works, and the verse scattered through it is not up to his best standard. Moreover, it contains the usual number of blunders in translation and the usual number of Persian words pedantically inserted into the English text. The reviewers had a field day with the book; the public ignored it.

With the exception of one lyric, "He Who Died at Azan," Arnold's Islamic poetry remains today as a tribute more to his versatility than to his talent. On the other hand, some of the best poetry he ever wrote is found in a series of translations from the Sanskrit made in the decade after *The Light of Asia: Indian Poetry* (1881), *Indian Idylls* (1883), *The Secret of Death* (1885), *The Song Celestial* (1885), and *Lotus and Jewel* (1887). Most of these are episodes from the *Mahabharata*, a poem which Arnold dubbed "The Iliad of India." It bears the dubious distinction of being the longest poem in the world, seven times the length of all the writings of Homer. For the Hindu, to read it through confers fame, prosperity, victory over one's enemies, salvation and remission of sins; but the Westerner, lacking these incentives, demands an abridgment, and this Arnold set about to provide. The Indian epics were known in England, of course, but the available translations were very pedestrian, so that it was not hard for Arnold to improve on them. The style of these poems is the same which made *The Light of Asia* popular: a smooth, readable line without gross errors and without surprises. Each reader will have his favorite passage, but most will enjoy the familiar legend of Nala and Damayanti, the lovely legend of Savitri, who persuaded death itself to give back her husband, or the noble story of how the Pandavas set out on their last journey, and how Yudisthira refused to enter heaven unless his dog accompanied him. Together, these episodes serve to give the casual reader a good idea of what the *Mahabharata* is like

without burdening him unduly, and many a man who would not have read the entire poem, even in English, has reason to be grateful to Arnold's industry.

Two other poems written at this time belong in a category by themselves by virtue of their style and subject. These are "The Secret of Death," found in the collection of poems of the same name, and "In an Indian Temple," which appears as the first poem of *Lotus and Jewel*. "The Secret of Death" is a conversation between an Englishman and a Brahmin priest in a temple garden near Poona, as the two read together and discuss the message of the *Katha Upanishad*. Arnold's readers were dismayed by the large chunks of Sanskrit which he boldly threw into the text, but they found the rest of the poem a pleasant popular exposition of some of the cardinal doctrines of Hinduism. The questions of the English student anticipate many of the reader's own and provide a slight dramatic element.

The setting of "In an Indian Temple" is the same, save for the addition of a nautch girl named Gunga. The prostitute with a heart of gold was a theme beloved by more than one romantic writer, and Gunga is the Oriental equivalent of this hackneyed figure. Her songs and friendly, empty chatter are a foil to the solemn teaching of the priest and the moralizing of the English student. The theme is the occult meaning of the sacred word OM as expounded in the *Katha Upanishad*, a subject too complex for a quick summary here. The general manner of the poem is the same as the preceding one: a translation and commentary of the sacred text, interspersed with arguments and digressions more or less to the point. It is written in a mixed style, neither lyrical nor narrative nor didactic, but well adapted to the needs of those who wish to learn something—not too much—of the *Upanishads* in as painless a fashion as possible.

In addition to these longer poems are a small group of shorter ones on Oriental themes, or translations from the Sanskrit, such as "The Snake and the Baby," "From a Sikh Hymn," "From the Sanskrit Anthology," "The Rajput Nurse," "Basti Singh's

Wife," and "Grishma, or the Season of Heat." Most of these appear at the end of *Lotus and Jewel* under the catchall heading of "other poems." They neither add to nor detract from Arnold's achievement and have long since been forgotten.

The reviews that greeted these works were generally friendly, although they were not accorded the kind of praise that *The Light of Asia* met. The translations from the *Mahabharata* were the most generally liked, although many readers resented the free use of Sanskrit words, such as *svayamvara*, without the help of glossary or footnotes. One reviewer thought that *Indian Idylls* would take their place beside Homer, and another rated them at least as high as *The Light of Asia*. The two adaptations of the *Upanishads* attracted less attention and are only scantily mentioned in the reviews. The minor poems received still less attention, with the exception of "The Rajput Nurse," which Arnold often recited in public and which one critic thought came close to being "one of the finest ballads in the language." Judgments like these seem extravagant today, but the neglect into which this large body of verse has fallen is also unreasonable.

Arnold's various translations from the Sanskrit may all be regarded as preparation for his major translation, which appeared in 1885: *The Song Celestial*, or *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Gita* is an episode of unknown authorship and uncertain date, found in the *Mahabharata*, consisting of a dialogue between the hero Arjuna and God, incarnated as Krishna Vasudeva, in which Krishna expounds the principal beliefs of modern Hinduism. It is a poem dear to all Hindus and especially to the Vaishnavas, with whom it occupies the position that the New Testament does among Christians. As an exposition of the philosophy of action, or *kar-mayoga*, it is suited to the needs of the man who earns his living in the world, and may have appealed to Arnold the more on this account. The *Gita* had already been translated many times into English, French, Latin, and German, both in prose and poetry, so that Arnold had any number of trots to help him. He used two translations in particular, those of Schlegel (1823)



and Davies (1882). His procedure apparently was to make his own translation directly from the Sanskrit, referring to the earlier versions for help in disputed or ambiguous passages. To this task he brought a poet's insight, but little original scholarship, and in the most difficult places he was content to follow Davies' judgments. *The Song Celestial* embodies, therefore, the scholarship of eighty years ago, and in some respects has been made obsolete by later studies.

There is only one commonly received version of the *Gita*, so that the poem presents few textual problems; nevertheless Arnold undertook to cut five short passages from his translation on the grounds that they were late interpolations into the original text. In doing so, he acted partly on Davies' suggestion and partly on his own judgment. The cuts were made for various pretexts: one passage seemed less elevated in tone than the rest, another seemed self-contradictory and obscure, a third offended him by teaching that God condemns the wicked to Hell, and so forth. Arnold, in short, was trying to make the *Gita* live up to his standards of uniformity and consistency, forgetting that the book is a poem, not a logical system of theology, and that it is the genius of Hinduism to admit many apparently conflicting points of view. It is unwise to suppose that a Sanskrit poem is textually corrupt, just because its author does not think like a Victorian Englishman.

The language of Sanskrit philosophy is not easy to translate into English, as many words have several meanings, and some represent concepts that do not even exist in Western thought. Arnold generally rendered these in a very approximate fashion, picking a vague or general English word. In some cases he gave four or five different equivalents for one Sanskrit term, according to the context. Others he preferred to leave untranslated, so that some of his lines are not easy for a novice to understand. This same free handling extends to entire slokas. It is impossible to translate Sanskrit literally into English of similar grammatical structure, and so one has to render ideas, rather than words

and phrases. Faced with such a problem, Arnold always erred on the side of freedom, and often in recasting a sentence he did not hesitate to add new phrases to illuminate some difficult Sanskrit term. At times his version was more vigorous and graphic than the original, but the vividness was usually achieved at the cost of accuracy; indeed, some passages seem to be not even paraphrases, but new poems suggested by the old. The scholar will be offended by these inaccuracies; the average reader is more struck by the diffuseness of Arnold's style. Terseness was never one of his virtues. It would have been better if he had made each stanza of his translation equal to one sloka of the original; instead he translated in the proportion of one to one and a half and used run-on lines far too freely.

Despite these faults, the poem does have some real merit. It is everywhere readable, fluent, and dignified, maintaining the highest level of sustained poetic excellence that Arnold ever achieved. The opening lines have a certain epic nobility, and the climactic eleventh chapter is certainly magnificent rhetoric, if it is not exactly poetry. The judgment which one passes on *The Song Celestial* depends on whether one is looking for a literal or a readable translation, since no one has yet succeeded in combining both virtues in one. For the scholar there are plenty of accurate translations, some of them so literal as to be almost unintelligible, but there is no literary translation that has superseded this one.<sup>1</sup> Today it is the only one of Arnold's poems that is still regularly read and the one on which his future reputation must rest.<sup>2</sup>

Not all of Arnold's work was on Indian themes, however. Miscellaneous poems, translations from European tongues, epigrams, occasional verse, and love lyrics poured out steadily during

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1 The version by Christopher Isherwood and Swami Paramananda is much less florid than Arnold's, although its blend of classical hexameters with the Beowulf meter is grotesque.

2 Gandhi, who was profoundly influenced by the Gita, had never read the poem until he read Arnold's version.

these busy years and were collected, some in *The Secret of Death* and others in *Lotus and Jewel*. Arnold must have feared that he was becoming known too exclusively as an Orientalist, for in 1888 he gathered these together, along with some of his youthful work and issued them under the title *Poems National and Non-Oriental*. The most ambitious of the group was called "A Casket of Gems," and was written as an offering to Fanny. It consisted of a cycle of eighteen poems, each one describing a different gem, the whole group together forming the "casket." The stones were so arranged that the first letters of their names formed acrostically the name of his wife, Fanny Maria Adelaide. Arnold loved jewels, as he loved jeweled diction, and this poem enabled him to indulge both loves to the full. Into these verses he packed all sorts of legends and curious lore about stones. The style is loose-jointed and shows traces of hasty composition, so that one must rate it higher as an offering to Fanny than to the muse. It is a *tour de force* of versification, rather than real poetry.

One of the best non-Oriental poems which Arnold published at this period was his translation of *Nencia da Barberino*, a pastoral love poem by Lorenzo de' Medici. The original is a gem of Tuscan poetry, and Arnold's version captures much of its freshness and charm. The loose construction and unrestrained enjambement which weaken *A Casket of Gems* are not in evidence here.

Several of Arnold's minor poems were inspired by paintings. He was an amateur artist in his own right and was married to an artist; what was more natural than that he should have drawn themes for his poems from what he saw in the art galleries? At that period the two arts of poetry and painting were closer than they have been at any time since: a painting was supposed to tell a story and a poem to paint a picture. The Pre-Raphaelites in particular took this view of their art, and Arnold's work shows a close affinity to theirs, in his love of color, his fondness for remote and archaic settings, and his sentimentality.

One Pre-Raphaelite canvas that directly influenced Arnold was by Burne-Jones, showing a mermaid bearing down to her cavern the handsome body of a drowned sailor. Arnold saw this painting while passing through the Royal Academy one day in the company of Julian, and his response was so strong that within an hour he had tossed off half a dozen stanzas of poetic interpretation. Burne-Jones did not welcome Arnold's efforts, and his only reply was that "a picture may hold its own counsel." Arnold was not the only one to be stirred by the theme, however; a far greater poet than he, William Butler Yeats, wrote a similar poem that may have been inspired by the same picture. Millais was more sympathetic than Burne-Jones to such attempts, and when Arnold wrote a poem describing his painting, "The Pest," the artist was so pleased that he held a reception before the picture and invited Arnold to read his verses. They were later published in *The Secret of Death* under the title "The Cholera in Italy."

The decade of 1879 to 1889 was the high point of Arnold's reputation, and recognition came to him so freely that his house became a veritable museum of medals and decorations, mostly foreign. When visitors came, Fanny would exhibit his orders and he would proudly show her paintings, while the children sat by and worshipped at both shrines. In 1888 he was knighted. Fanny, now Lady Arnold, was vastly proud of her husband's new honor, but did not live to enjoy it long, for in the following year she died of pleurisy. She had been Arnold's wife and companion for twenty years, had shared his rise to fame, and had inspired much of his work. With her death, a major epoch in his life ended. It was not the end of his work, however, for the fifteen years that remained to him witnessed an Indian summer of new creativeness; but from this time on, one thinks of Arnold as an aging man.



## CHAPTER IX

### AMERICA AND JAPAN: 1889-1892

After Fanny's death her husband was physically and emotionally exhausted. He needed a vacation, and when the opportunity offered itself in the form of an invitation from Charles William Eliot to visit and lecture at Harvard, Arnold took it gladly. Here was a chance to travel, to see his wife's native city, to meet his relatives the Channings and Higginsons, and to find relief from his work on the *Telegraph*. The paper gave him the post of "traveling commissioner," with the task of writing dispatches from time to time describing his travels. Accordingly we have a full account of the trip, which was later published in book form as *Seas and Lands*. Accompanied by Katharine, he sailed from the Mersey on August 22, 1889, in a grey southwesterly squall, with driving sheets of rain. The ship was crowded with emigrants to Canada: Scotch, Irish, Scandinavian, Belgian, and British, and Arnold was struck by the misery of these wanderers, who suffered from crowding and lack of water for washing no less than from homesickness and seasickness.

Five days later they sighted the icy and fogbound straits of Belle Isle and entered the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. Quebec impressed Arnold as "one of the noblest prospects of the globe" and as a reminder of the need for the English element in Canada to keep the French under control, to save the land from "priestly domination." The first day of September found the travelers in Montreal, where they entrained for Toronto. The rolling hills of southern Ontario, the newly cleared farmland, the great forests, the evident signs of prosperity, and above all, the vast distances impressed Arnold deeply and moved him with patriotic pride in the majesty and resources of the British Empire. Toronto pleased him; it might almost, he felt, be mistaken for an English town, except for the planked sidewalks, the electric fans in the stores,

and the telephone wires overhead. He also noted with alarm the "dangerous American taste for cold drinks." His host was his old tutor, Goldwin Smith, whose suburban home with its broad lawn reminded him of Oxford.

The next stop was the "very handsome and agreeable city of Washington," which impressed him with a "green and umbrageous beauty hardly seen elsewhere." He visited the Capitol like any tourist and wryly remarked that most of the pictures in the rotunda seemed to commemorate British defeats. The high point of the stay was an interview at the White House, though whether Arnold went as a representative of his paper or as a private citizen is not quite clear. President Harrison, "a courteous, kindly, shrewd and business-stamped gentleman," received the visitors at once; Arnold gives the impression that he broke off a cabinet meeting as a mark of respect. The conversation stayed safely on courteous generalities about Anglo-American friendship, providing material for several columns of copy in the *Telegraph*.

Philadelphia was the next stop, where the Arnolds were the guests of George W. Childs, proprietor of the *Public Ledger*. They saw the usual sights of the city, including Independence Hall and Wanamaker's, but the great attraction for Arnold was Camden, across the river, where Walt Whitman, then an old man, still lived. It is to Arnold's credit that he was able to recognize Whitman as a great poet at a time when most Americans regarded him as a freak, if not a libertine. Indeed, much of Whitman's early recognition came from Englishmen: William Michael Rossetti, John Addington Symonds, Edward Dowden, Oscar Wilde, Lord Tennyson, Sir Henry Irving, Ernest Rhys, and Swinburne in his younger and more fiery days—all admired Whitman, corresponded with him or visited him, while James Russell Lowell, Bayard Taylor, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Barrett Wendell, and George Santayana turned up their cultivated noses. Arnold had an admiration as great as that of any of his countrymen for Whitman, in whom he saw the embodiment of all that was young and fresh and vigorous in the New World.

It is interesting that he should have understood Whitman so well, for one could scarcely find two men whose writings were more unlike. One was a singer of ancient or buried civilizations, and the other a prophet of a new world; one was a Tory, and the other a passionate democrat; Whitman experimented in new poetic forms, while Arnold clung to the traditional manner and could no more have written free verse than he could have flown. There was a robustness in Arnold, however, which responded to that of Whitman; they both loved nature and the sea, and both had an embracing sympathy for all living things. Arnold's study of Oriental religions prepared him to appreciate Whitman's pantheism, and his general philosophical optimism found a yet more vigorous counterpart in Whitman's hearty acceptance of life. Even the erotic frankness which shocked so many Victorians pleased Arnold, who saw in it a long overdue recognition that the body is no more shameful than the soul.

Whitman was then living at the house in Mickle Street where he spent his last years. The party had a little difficulty finding the place, which was on a side street sandwiched in between two retail stores—the last place, it seemed to Arnold, where one would look for a poet. When the party finally found the right address, Arnold's enthusiasm rather overwhelmed Whitman, to whom he quoted page after page of *Leaves of Grass*, while his host seemed rather vague about *The Light of Asia*. His account of the visit is somewhat sentimental. He describes the good, gray poet, seated in the sunset glow of his happy old age, his firm hand resting on his guest's, reading his poetry aloud and addressing everyone with "Allons, camarade," while his sweet-faced housekeeper and her bronzed, handsome son joined in the lyrical talk.

The last week of September found him in New England as the guest of President Eliot. Boston and Cambridge charmed him, especially the green suburban areas which he thought "prettier and more tastefully laid out and built than almost any in England." The State House, "overhanging the roofs like a perpetual sun,"

suggested to him the desirability of gilding the dome of Saint Paul's in London, and the outlook from Beacon Street over Boston Common recalled to him the "familiar front of Picadilly and the Green Park at home." Much of the time was taken up with visiting, for there were American cousins to meet and a family wedding to attend. A dinner was held in his honor at the Saturday Club, which Dr. Holmes attended, recalling by his presence the fading glories of that literary circle. When the poets could not come to Arnold, he went to them: Whittier received him in Danvers and talked poetry and religion, Mrs. Emerson took him on a picnic to Walden Pond, and Alice Longfellow entertained him on Brattle Street. Then on October first and second came two lectures in Sanders Theater at Harvard, one on the *Upanishads* and the other on the *Mahabharata*.

From Boston the two travelers headed west, crossing the Berkshires in a blaze of autumn color, over the prairies and the Rocky Mountains (whose canyons Arnold called *wadis*), reaching San Francisco on the eighth of October. The stay in California was a repetition of the triumphal progress through the East: he was feted by the Bohemian Club with a testimonial dinner at which Joaquin Miller was present, and he was guest of honor at the Harvard Club of San Francisco. Finally on October 17 he put behind him the dinner parties and lion hunters of the West Coast and sailed for Yokohama on the White Star liner, S.S. *Belgic*.

The *Belgic* was loaded with Chinese returning to their own land from the slums of San Francisco and the track gangs of the western railroads. It is strange that Arnold, who was so sympathetic to the Orient generally, should have found little to admire in the Chinese. In San Francisco, Chinatown was for him only a scene of picturesque squalor; he "did" the sights like any other tourist, poking his nose into opium dens and making wry faces at the contents of the apothecary shops, but in all his descriptions of what he saw he wrote as an unsympathetic outsider. Confucianism he did not like; at best he found it superficial and at the



worst, immoral. The steerage passengers on the *Belgic* seemed to him smelly and a bit comic, but not very interesting otherwise. As his own steward put it, "Plenty you perhaps savee, but no savee bottomside Chinaman mind."

After a short stay in Yokohama the Arnolds went on to Tokyo, where they spent the first few days as guests of Mr. Frazer, the British minister. Arnold wished, however, to break away from the European colony in order to live in native style and see the country at close range. A notice was therefore inserted in the *Japan Mail*, which brought immediate news of a bungalow for rent at Azabu, a suburb of Tokyo well beyond the European quarter. Its occupant was General Palmer, a retired British army officer who was then engaged as an adviser to the Japanese government and as a foreign correspondent for the *London Times*. Palmer wished to move out, so the Arnolds moved in without more ado. Since Azabu was outside the treaty limits, foreigners were not usually permitted to stay there, except as teachers and government servants, and even the Anglican bishop, who dwelt near by, did so only by being classified as a schoolmaster. The government officials were not willing to make any exceptions for Arnold. The property was owned by Inspector Asso, himself a public servant, who tried to argue that the poet was a guest of General Palmer, but since Arnold was paying rent, that fiction could not be maintained. Finally, to satisfy the law, Asso engaged Arnold as "tutor" to his three daughters at the modest salary of 600 sen a year, then worth about £100. The duties were light, consisting only of chatting to the girls in English, and helping to revise the English text of a Japanese history which Asso was editing.

The house was an ordinary Japanese dwelling of the better sort, save that it had glass windows instead of the usual paper screens. It was set in the grounds of Asso's more pretentious residence, surrounded by a typical Japanese garden with its stone lanterns, rockery and fish pond. Arnold adopted completely the Oriental style of living, even to the extent of sleeping on the floor and removing his shoes indoors. Katharine, on the other hand, was

not so easily converted to Japanese ways. Her father was happy to settle down for an indefinite stay, but she was, after all, young and unmarried and not anxious to spend the rest of her life in Tokyo. She did wear the native dress on occasion, but she furnished her room in the European style, and as for adapting herself to the Eastern way of life, she once nearly asphyxiated herself by carelessly leaving a charcoal stove burning in her room all night. Arnold, on the other hand, fell in love with Japan at once and felt, after leaving England, like a bird released from its cage. He was carried away by the grace and courtesy, the delicacy and charm which he found, so much so that he was accused of failing, from an excess of sentimentality, to do justice to the seamier side of Japanese life. However, it was perhaps easier for a European to be uncritical of Japan in 1889 than it would have been a generation earlier, or than it was to be a few years later. Foreigners were then welcome to a degree that would have been unthinkable only a few decades before, and the hostility that broke out in the riots of 1893 was not yet too obvious. Much of the beauty of old Japan still lingered, and the squalid slums that came with the industrial revolution had scarcely put in an appearance. The nation seemed well on the way to establishing an efficient, modern representative government, and the occasional dark spots in the picture (such as the Japanese fondness for political assassination) could be disregarded as the relics of a more turbulent age, soon to be outgrown.

Still, no matter how idyllic Japan may have been when Arnold saw it, it is difficult to see how he could have concluded that the Japanese could not take life *au grand sérieux*. One can well imagine that an aggressive, virile, and fanatically patriotic nation, such as the Japanese have shown themselves to be, would be offended by such patronizing words as these:

Life, as you will see, is not looked upon in a very serious light by my charming fellow-citizens hereabout. I sometimes, indeed, think they must all have been birds in a previous existence—they have the same delightful way of doing nothing very

busily, chirping through the days of existence, preening their bright feathers, pecking forever at some tiny foolish food, and loving so intensely singing, and sunshine, and blossoms.

Obviously Arnold held views about Japan that were as much a sentimental distortion as the Pre-Raphaelite picture was a distortion of the Middle Ages. Hearn was another visitor who fell into the same trap. Later, like Hearn, Arnold learned to see deeper into the Oriental character, and though he never lost his love for the Japanese, he came to understand something of the compulsive rigidity and pitiless discipline that underlie the celebrated Japanese courtesy. His later writings, like *Adzuma*, dealt more with the patriotism and military traditions and personal heroism of the Japanese; they show that Arnold had learned to appreciate the iron in the Japanese character.

In the summer of 1894, when war broke out in Korea between China and Japan, most British hoped and expected that China would speedily beat her smaller enemy. Arnold knew better. In an article in the *New Review* he boldly took the side of Japan, defended her interests in Korea, denied that China had any valid right of suzerainty in that country, and predicted the speedy defeat of the Chinese armies. When victory came in the following year, he wrote a second article entitled "The Triumph of Japan," pointing out that the British had been misled by such works as *Madame Chrysanthème* and the *Mikado* into underestimating the real might of Japan. Japan, he declared, was no "globe-trotter's playground of undersized frivolous people, living a life like that depicted upon the tea-trays and screens, but a great, a serious, and a most civilized nation." Some day, he predicted, Japan would be one of the great powers of the world.

On one occasion Arnold's Japanese sympathies carried him too far. In the summer of 1890 he was guest of Count Ito, the Prime Minister of Japan, at his country estate in Odawara. Arnold had the greatest admiration for this man, whom he called "the Bismarck of Japan." The conversation had turned to the future

fortunes of the country and the growing tension in Korea, when Ito laughingly asked his guest:

"Now what would you do if you were the Prime Minister of Japan?"

"Excellency," I replied, "I would double the Emperor's navy, cultivate friendship with England and America, and ransack the mountains of Japan for coal, iron, copper, petroleum, and gold."

He then went on to make other recommendations for expansion, including the construction of a large merchant marine. Emigration, he felt should be discouraged:

"Moreover, do not, I entreat, waste your Japanese citizens, who are the best of emigrants, in Mexico, San Francisco, and such ungrateful places. Utilize them for Japan, and for the Emperor."

"But we have not enough room for the surplus population within His Imperial Majesty's Dominions."

"I nevertheless hope, excellency, and I believe," was my answer, "that Japan will some day be large enough for the hundred millions of children which she will certainly possess by the middle of the next century." But at this point the conversation grew too private and special for report.

Arnold, of course, rather dramatized his position as adviser to the Bismarck of Japan. But what was the advice he gave Ito? Was it to move into Korea—or some bolder plan of conquest in Manchuria or Siberia? Whatever it was, Arnold would have been distressed to know that fifty years later the Japanese were to drive his own countrymen out of Singapore and Rangoon, in pursuit of just such a policy as he had recommended.

One of the milestones of Japan's progress in westernizing its institutions was the first Parliament in the autumn of 1890. Arnold secured a ticket of admission and watched the proceedings from the gallery. The dispatch he wrote for the *Telegraph* was full of enthusiasm, rejoicing that Japan should be the first of all



Oriental nations "to range herself under the banner of organized freedom, of public liberty, and legislation guaranteed by free institutions."

At that time, Japan was still bound by a humiliating treaty which denied Japanese courts any jurisdiction over foreigners living within her borders; and until the rights of extraterritoriality were abolished, she was not willing to open the interior to foreign residence or to increase the volume of outside trade. Foreign nations, on the other hand, were unwilling to trust their citizens to courts which might be arbitrary or unskilled, or which might apply legal principles unknown to the West. To meet these objections, the Mikado approved in 1890 a new code of laws, civil, commercial, and criminal, based on Western models. Arnold saw that the old system of extraterritoriality had become an anachronism, which would only intensify Japanese ill-will if allowed to continue. A long article in *Seas and Lands* dealt with the question and urged Britain to rescue her prestige in the Orient by allowing Japan to enter the comity of Western nations on equal terms. The passing years emphasized the force of Arnold's advice; in 1893 riots broke out in Tokyo in demonstration against foreigners, and in the summer of the following year Great Britain bowed to the inevitable and signed a commercial treaty abolishing her rights of extraterritoriality. The United States followed, and by 1899 all Occidentals were subject to Japanese courts. As Arnold had predicted, Japan had at last come of age.

Arnold assumed without question that the fusion of the Western scientific culture with the more contemplative culture of the East would require the transplanting to Japan of British institutions and the cultivation of the English language. In an address before the Japanese Educational Society he rejoiced at the large number of members who knew English and calmly assured them that the English language was destined to become the "accepted and common tongue over the civilized globe." He even permitted himself a sigh of regret at the anticipated disuse of French, Italian,

and Spanish, as well as the literary languages of Asia: Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit.

At the same time that Arnold contemplated the blessings that would come when Japan had created for herself a modern technological civilization, he also feared—with reason—lest much of the distinctive charm and delicacy of Japanese culture should disappear beneath the weight of westernization. In this he repeated the same anxiety that had already been voiced by Hearn, by Fenollosa, and by many Japanese. How real this danger was is apparent from his description of the paintings at the National Exhibition held in Tokyo in 1890. At the very time that European artists were learning from the Japanese new secrets of perspective and composition, the Japanese were adopting the European manner wholesale, often without understanding it, and with results that were frightful by the standards either of the East or the West. A similar deterioration took place in the quality of chinaware and other articles intended for export. When the feudal estates were broken up, and with them the fortunes of the men who had traditionally been the Maecenases of the fine arts, the artist, fallen on evil days, had to depend increasingly on exports for a living and so was obliged to adjust his work to the prevailing standards of Victorian taste. The depths of this degradation were reached in the seventies and eighties; by the nineties, under the influence of a rising nationalism, and with the help of sympathetic foreigners like Fenollosa, the tide began to flow the other way. Arnold hailed this change as a veritable Renaissance and welcomed the re-establishment of the Japanese artistic individuality.

A measure of the sincerity of his interest in the native traditions of Japan is to be seen in his action when, in the summer of 1890, a Japanese of high family brought to his house an ancient silk scroll, over fifty feet in length, richly adorned with gold and crystals, depicting the attempted invasion of Japan in 1259 by Kublai Khan. It had been in the same family since it was painted in 1280, and it was now offered for sale to Arnold at his own price. He saw that it was priceless and comparable in importance

to the Bayeux tapestry, but rather than take advantage of the offer, he sent the owners to the secretary of the Mikado with the recommendation that it be placed in the royal archives. The Mikado inspected it with interest and gave orders for its purchase at a generous price.

Of all the arts of Japan, the one that most interested him was, of course, poetry. He was fascinated by its terseness, its use of suggestion, the clearness and economy of its images. These were qualities which were to influence English and American poetry greatly in the next generation; the Imagists, in particular, took Chinese and Japanese poetry for their models, with results as diverse as the work of Ezra Pound and Adelaide Crapsey. Arnold admired this concision, but felt that it was basically inimitable and that for the Western mind to grasp the full force of a poetic image it had to be drawn in all its details and shading. He tried, for example, to translate a short descriptive poem of five words, but by the time he was through his version had run to forty words, and the magic of the original was wholly dissipated. It is a pity that he was never able to learn the secret of Japanese concision, for it would have corrected his one most glaring fault: writing too much and too easily. Another twenty years were to pass before the West discovered the secret of Imagism.

Of course, Japan held an especial fascination for Arnold as a Buddhist country. His judgments of Japanese Buddhism were conflicting and not uniformly favorable. At first he thought it "degenerate and decorative," and suggested that "if Buddhism had only come straight to Japan, instead of dribbling thither through the mud of China and the snows of Korea, this would be the kingdom where its influence would show best and brightest." Probably he regarded the Mahayana, with its pantheon of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as a superstitious corruption of the austere faith of primitive Buddhism. Later, as he came to know the Japanese better, he began to speak more fairly of their religion, attributing to its influence the courtesy and self-respect of the nation. (It is characteristic of his anti-Chinese bias that he gave Confucianism

no credit for civilizing Japan.) The more he saw of the Japanese Buddhists, the more he liked them, while they in turn lionized him. Towards the end of November, 1889, he was visited by a delegation of priests, whom he described as "friendly, courteous and accomplished gentlemen." They brought him a Japanese translation of *The Light of Asia* and extended to him an invitation to lecture to them on the Holy Places of the Faith, a subject in which, as we have seen, he was deeply interested. He spent much of his time at Azabu interviewing the local Buddhist abbots and sages, many of whom were reputed to have acquired superhuman powers by means of meditation, and he toyed with the idea of writing a major poem on some such theme. It is just as well that he gave up a project which at best would only have invited unfavorable comparison with *The Light of Asia*.

Besides all these activities, Arnold found time for sightseeing. *Seas and Lands* contains descriptions of most of the tourist attractions, such as Nikko and Kamakura, as well as a number of less familiar places. The accounts are interesting, but add little to the usual guide-book descriptions. The literal high point of his sightseeing was the ascent of Fuji in April of 1890, in company with Captain Ingles, R. N., naval adviser to the Japanese government. The trip took two days, allowing time to botanize, geologize, and look at the scenery. By good luck, the summit was free of clouds, and a perfect view was to be had. Despite cold and fatigue, Arnold found time to huddle himself in some blankets in a sheltered spot and dash off ninety lines of descriptive verse for Inspector Asso's daughters.

He kept up his social life as well. At various times he was guest of the Prime Minister, Count Yamagata, of the leader of the opposition, Count Ito, of the British representative in Tokyo, of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, then traveling in Japan, and, on two occasions, of the Emperor himself. When one reflects that this round of parties was in addition to his daily study of Japanese, his regular dispatches to his paper, and his



work on *The Light of the World*, one can imagine how busy his vacation was.

Arnold may have planned to stay in Japan for the rest of his life, but this was not to be. Whether because of the press of business, or Katharine's desire to return to London, where the eligible bachelors were to be found, the two left Tokyo by January of 1891. They sailed from Kobe on the twelfth on the S.S. *Verona*; on the fourteenth day they were in Nagasaki and by the seventeenth in Hong Kong, after weathering a nasty typhoon in the China Sea. At Hong Kong, after a quick round of sight-seeing, they transferred to the P. & O. liner *Pekin*. The rest of the trip was uneventful, and by the end of February Arnold was back in Fleet Street. He was not to stay there long, however. There were many claims upon his attention and three books to be seen through the press, but the wanderlust was on him, and before the year was out he was off again to America, this time under the auspices of the well-known lecture manager, James Burton Pond.

Major Pond was the Barnum of the lecture hall. His first venture as a manager was in Salt Lake City, where he made the acquaintance of Ann Eliza, Mrs. Brigham Young number thirteen, who had recently renounced both Young and Mormonism. With a sound sense of what would interest the public, Pond engaged Ann Eliza for a lecture tour, and so entered the occupation which he followed for the rest of his life. The seventies were the golden age of the lyceum lecturer in America, and Pond soon became the leading man in the business. A large middle-class audience had arisen, eager for culture as purveyed from the stages of countless lyceums and small town opera houses by such men as Emerson, Mark Twain, Henry Ward Beecher, Lyman Abbott, and hundreds of others. English speakers were especially in demand, and scores of celebrities and near-celebrities crossed the Atlantic to make a tidy profit patronizing American audiences. Pond acted as manager for many of them, including Matthew

Arnold, Henry Stanley, Conan Doyle, and an assorted collection of deans and bishops.

Pond had tried as early as 1886 to sign up Arnold, but with no luck. He tried again in 1891 through the good offices of Stanley, who had just finished a most successful American tour under Pond's management, and so persuasive was the explorer that by the end of the summer Pond had hooked his man. This time Arnold came alone, reaching New York in October. The weather was cold and rainy, but Arnold was vigorous and ready to go—fortunately, for from that moment on he had scarcely a moment to himself. He had asked Pond to steer him clear of social engagements, but the first week was spent on little else. After the newspaper interviews there was a private dinner at Pond's house and a private reading from *The Light of the World*; then a semi-private reading at the Everett House "before a select circle of friends," next a theatrical dinner to which Joseph Jefferson and W. J. Florence were invited, and finally a gala evening at the Lotus Club, attended by Seth Low, Richard Henry Stoddard, E. C. Stedman, R. W. Gilder, and E. B. Harper. Pond, it is clear, was a master of literary publicity.

From New York the party went to Philadelphia, where the tour was to start, and Arnold paid another call on Walt Whitman. Pond went with him, also John Russell Young, the journalist and later minister to China. They found Whitman seated in an upstairs living room, a dirty goat-skin robe thrown over his knees, surrounded by a mountain of old newspapers and magazines which he had read and tossed aside. The two poets plunged into conversation at once, with Arnold doing most of the talking for an hour and a half. The party left the old man rather fatigued, but happy.

That afternoon Arnold and Pond returned to Philadelphia, dined with George W. Childs in Bryn Mawr, and met Martha Carey Thomas. The following day, November 3, Arnold made his first appearance in Philadelphia at the Academy of Music, where he held a large audience spellbound for two and a half

hours, even though it was the eve of a hotly contested election, and the street outside was full of bands, bonfires, and crowds of excited people. Pond reported happily that the gross receipts were \$1,317. He was delighted with his *protégé*, who proved an ideal lecturer. His manner on the platform was self-possessed and free of self-consciousness, his voice was melodious and well-disciplined, his attitude was one of enthusiasm and absorption in the work at hand. In social gatherings he delighted everyone with his charm, his ability to talk to anyone on his own terms, and his genuine readiness to be pleased with what he saw. This last trait especially delighted Americans, who were used to more supercilious treatment from visiting Englishmen. His style of reading was partly improvisation, for he recited from memory, often changing the text of the poems slightly as he did so. The book would rest in his hand as he spoke, but he referred to it only occasionally.

The Philadelphia speech set the style of the entire trip, which took Arnold back to New York, then on to Boston and Cambridge, west through upper New York state and back to his starting point. In each city Pond arranged for him to be introduced by the most impressive literary figure available, so that by the end of the tour he had shared the platform with Stedman, Stoddard, Gilder, Howells, Brander Matthews, Edward Everett Hale, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Arnold had originally agreed to give fifty readings, but so great was his success that a new contract was made by which he undertook to continue another hundred nights for \$20,000, an enormous sum in those days. He was still fresh and eager, so Pond sent him off at once on a midwestern tour as far as Minneapolis and Kansas City.

By December the pace began to tell, and Pond began to feel concern for Arnold's voice. In one city the auditorium was so large that he begged him to speak lower. Arnold agreed, but arranged that Pond should station himself in the top balcony and signal with a handkerchief if he did not hear. The heat at the top of the hall was so great that Pond soon forgot the signal

and began to mop his head with his handkerchief. Arnold saw him and raised his voice. Again Pond wiped his forehead, and again Arnold spoke louder, until it seemed to Pond that his speaker would blow the roof off. It was not until after the program was over that he remembered the signal.

By the middle of the month Arnold was clearly weakening. Probably in the pleasure and excitement of new scenes and friendly audiences he pushed himself too far, and Pond, by his own account, seems to have been willing to drive Arnold to the limit. A series of five matinees was arranged at Daly's Theater in New York, where he lectured twice a day, in addition to evening appearances in Philadelphia—a program calling for constant commuting between the two cities. On top of this, Pond booked him for appearance in Trenton, Newark, Baltimore, Washington, Middletown, Brooklyn, Portland, Lakewood, Montclair, Orange, and Worcester. By the end of December he succumbed to the grippe, and, as Pond ill-naturedly put it, "owing to the superior knowledge of a learned doctor, he was obliged to be ill."

Andrew Carnegie was a friend of Arnold and hurried round to see him, also sending for his own doctor. On his orders the poet was obliged to cancel his engagements, much to the annoyance of Pond, who had to refund \$1,800 to the public at the box-office of Daly's. A few days later Pond made a deal with the sick man to cancel the original contract if Arnold would agree to give six more readings in New York at the expiration of the current series. Arnold was willing, but at the last minute the doctor forbade him to appear, and Pond had to refund \$3,000 more. By this time the manager was thoroughly out of patience with Carnegie and his doctor and did his best to persuade them that Arnold should speak; Arnold, however, was now seriously alarmed, and told Pond that if he did not leave the country soon he would never be able to go at all. He was resolved to cut short the tour as soon as he could and return to Japan. The next day he left the Everett House to take up residence with Carnegie for the rest of his stay, where Pond found



him soon afterward, lonesome and homesick and wondering whether he should not continue lecturing after all.

On February 5 Arnold gave the first of a series of four farewell readings at Daly's, but again the doctor intervened and the last three had to be cancelled. Pond, bemoaning the fine business he had lost, went to Carnegie's house to see Arnold, who consented to give one last reading, doctor or no doctor. After some hasty week-end advertising, the reading came off as scheduled on Monday morning, February 18. Daly's Theater was full. Arnold read the "Discourse of Buddha," the conversation of Mary Magdalene and the Magus from *The Light of the World*, "Egyptian Slippers," "The Renegade Lovers," "She and He," and a selection from Sa'di. Before the final reading he spoke briefly of the friendly reception which America had given him and expressed his "deepest conviction that the future history of the human race depends for its happy development upon that firm and eternal friendship of the great Republic and of the British Empire which is at once so necessary and natural." When the reading was over, the stage was crowded with friends and well-wishers, who almost buried Arnold in flowers. Pond observed with satisfaction that the receipts were \$1,851, and that Arnold, when offered his share of the take, refused it. On this happy note the tour ended, and Arnold, free again, headed westward for Japan.

On reaching San Francisco he took two days off from social engagements to visit the Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton. Arnold was always ready to be pleased by what he saw in America; he liked the California scenery and the California wines, but nothing which he saw in the West impressed him so much as this memorial to the generosity of a California miner. He spent a happy day and a night on the mountain top as the guest of Professor Holden, the director of the observatory, watching the stars through the great telescope and discussing astronomy with his host.

His ship for Japan was the *Belgic* again, leaving San Francisco early in March. In addition to her regular passengers, the ship carried six hundred Chinese coolies who had been denied admission to the United States because of an outbreak of smallpox among them and were being returned to Hawaii for work on the sugar plantations. Honolulu impressed Arnold as an earthly paradise, and he described it in glowing language. The islands were then an independent monarchy, and thanks to the good offices of a wealthy planter, Arnold was made welcome by the Prime Minister, Samuel Parker, who arranged an audience for his guest with Queen Liliuokalani. "Audience" is perhaps too formal a word for the friendly afternoon call which took place, the Queen welcoming the party by the simple act of shaking hands. Arnold was entranced and lavished his choicest superlatives on the "good, intelligent, sweet-faced, and kind-hearted Liliuokalani." In the evening, after a tour of the Iolani Palace, there came a large dinner party, with Hawaiian food and hula dancers. Arnold thought the dance was "of a decidedly Polynesian character, and not quite such as could be taught in a polite dancing academy of New York or London."

The most exciting experience of the trip came when the *Belgic* was somewhere in mid-Pacific. Arnold was walking the deck one afternoon when one of the officers approached him to ask if he would lecture to all the passengers in the main saloon at once. Arnold consented and asked the reason for so sudden a request. The ship, it proved, was on fire, and the captain, wishing to prevent a panic, had hit on this expedient to keep the passengers quiet while the hold was opened. Accordingly the decks were cleared, the passengers flocked into the saloon, and the doors were locked. Then for an hour and a half Arnold lectured on the subject "Death—and Afterwards," though few in his audience knew how apt the title was until the fire was put out and he was relieved.

Arnold's return to Japan was something of a homecoming, for by this time he was well known as a friend of all things

Japanese. Once again he was asked to lecture on the Gaya temple, and on June 5, 1892, he was decorated by the Foreign Minister with the Order of the Rising Sun, thus adding one more to his growing list of decorations. This the family was prepared for, but they were taken aback when word came from their father that he had decided to remarry. The lady was Tama Kurokawa of Sendai. The marriage took place that summer according to Japanese custom. The hitch was that the Japanese ceremony, though no doubt binding in the eyes of heaven, was not recognized by English law. Arnold, who had married the lady in good faith, refused to undergo any second ceremony that might cast doubt on the sanctity of his Japanese marriage and behaved most chivalrously and courageously in the face of a storm of disapproval from his friends and relations, especially his brothers. He brought Tama home in September, installed her in his Kensington home, and not until 1897 would he consent to the ceremony that made her officially Lady Arnold. Once in England she quickly won the love and respect of her husband's children, who were charmed by her personally and touched by the devotion that made a girl in her twenties willing to marry and care for a man so much older than herself. No doubt Arnold had her in mind when he wrote:

I am still inclined to believe that the average or abstract Japanese female comes, all things considered, nearest among her sex, as regards natural gifts, to what we understand by an angelic disposition. . . . She is, in point of fact, the most self-denying, the most dutiful and the most patient woman in the world, as well as the most considerate and pleasing; and, as I truly believe, more faithful to her . . . ideal of rectitude than any other of her sisters among the nations.

Lady Arnold survived her husband by many years and in 1956 was still living in London.

After 1890 Japan played the role in Arnold's writing that India had played until then, and an impressive series of poems, plays, essays, and translations began to roll from the press as

the fruit of his experiences in the Far East. Most of these works were journalistic and ephemeral, but all were written with the facility and enthusiasm characteristic of the author. Even now they make pleasant reading and are a valuable record of the development of Arnold's interests during this period. They are the more remarkable in that they were written at an age when most men's minds are rigidly set. For any man to have the emotional and intellectual flexibility to open his mind to a new culture and his heart to a foreign wife is unusual, and doubly so in one past sixty. It was one of Arnold's most admirable traits that he was never too old to learn something new, never too jaded for a fresh experience.

His first book on Japan was the collection of letters written for the *Telegraph* during 1889-1890. These dispatches originally appeared under the title "By Sea and Land," and were collected as *Seas and Lands*. Three-quarters of it are devoted to the Orient and contain Arnold's first impressions of Japan, at first superficial and then increasingly penetrating as familiarity bred respect. Nothing in the style calls for comment, save that it is written in the easy reportorial manner that characterized all Arnold's prose. The book is illustrated with photographs of all the usual tourist attractions, one or two of which seem to be taken from stereopticon slides.

The second book on Japan was based on four essays originally written for *Harper's Magazine* in 1890 and published in 1891 as *Japonica*. This was a far more careful study than the first and dealt with Japanese life in general, rather than just the personal experiences of the author. It touched on such topics as flower arrangement, bathhouses, marriage customs, the status of women, temples, child training, and servants. Far less journalistic than *Seas and Lands*, it came closer in form and intent to the interpretations of Japanese culture by Percival Lowell and Lafcadio Hearn. In appearance it was a more attractive volume than its predecessor: a flat quarto, with a Japanese design in black and gold on the cover, and plentifully illustrated.



Arnold's third Japanese book was a play, *Adzuma*, published by Longmans Green in 1893. This was the most ambitious work of the series. Any journalist can jot down his impressions of a new land and work them up into a hasty book, but in *Adzuma* Arnold tried something much harder. The story is a grim one. Adzuma is a beautiful girl promised in marriage to a warrior named Morito. For reasons of family expediency she is married instead to another knight, Wataru, who treats her with such kindness and affection that she forgets her former lover. Morito, however, possesses a family secret which, if revealed, would be the ruin of Wataru and his house. In order to recover Adzuma by fair means or foul, he uses this secret to blackmail her into allowing him access to her. Adzuma agrees, but first stipulates that Morito must kill Wataru; she even tells him where her husband sleeps and how he may be recognized. Morito enters the house by night and cuts off what he imagines to be Wataru's head, only to find that in the darkness he has killed Adzuma, who has substituted herself for her husband to save him and his reputation. Morito is so overcome by remorse that he retires to a lonely temple to live a life of prayer and penance until he dies. Dreams, omens, and prophecies play a large part in the play, and in this use of the supernatural Arnold may have been imitating Hearn, though he lacked the other writer's delicacy of style.

Arnold's intention in writing this play was to show how the karma of previous lives must be worked out in subsequent incarnations. Adzuma and Morito destroy each other because of a rivalry in a previous existence of which they are not aware and over which they have no control. Only Adzuma's mother knows the secret and tries to keep the two from meeting, but in vain, and when the meeting does occur the tragedy that follows has all the fatal inevitability of a Greek drama. Herein lies the fascination of the play and the quality that sets it apart from Arnold's other writings. All his other heroes are masters of their fates; their victories are simple conflicts of a free will fight-

ing against human enemies or moral temptations. In *Adzuma* the forces are more involved. The conflict takes place on three levels, the conscious, subconscious, and supernatural, and through them all, unknown to the actors themselves, a strict nemesis works itself out. Simply as a plot and as a psychological study, this play is Arnold's masterpiece.

Stylistically it is less successful. The poetry is uneven, and the language is far too much indebted to Elizabethan models, so that the reader is constantly saying to himself, "Here Arnold has borrowed from *Hamlet* or *Othello*, or *Lovelace*." Furthermore, he never shook off his old trick of introducing too much foreign material. To drag into an English play scraps of conversational Japanese or needless bits of out-of-the-way erudition is inexcusable. Arnold is his happiest in the little songs which his heroine sings from time to time. Most of them are translations from the Japanese, mere snatches of song which serve to set the mood of the scene. The most effective passage in the play is the scene in which Adzuma says farewell to her sleeping husband. Like the very similar scene in *The Light of Asia*, these lines have dignity and pathos and need no adventitious ornament to heighten their effect.

*Adzuma* was not written as a closet drama. It was intended for the stage, and as soon as it was done Arnold sent the manuscript to Julian, who was then in London, to arrange for its production. Julian took the play to Sir Henry Irving, who considered it carefully, but finally rejected it. So too did Sir Augustus Harris of Covent Garden and Augustin Daly of Daly's Theater. On the whole the critics who read it agreed with the producers. They spoke admiringly of individual passages and were pleased with the plot, but felt that it fell just short of being a successful acting play.<sup>1</sup>

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1 In 1954 this same legend appeared as a movie, produced by a Japanese company with the English title, *The Gate of Hell*. Photographically it is splendid, and dramatically it is faster-moving than *Adzuma*, but Arnold's plot is—in the opinion of this writer, at least—more complex, more interesting, and actually more convincing.

## CHAPTER X

# THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Much of Arnold's spare time in Japan was spent writing the poem which he hoped would rank as a worthy companion to *The Light of Asia*, and which, as if inviting comparison, he called *The Light of the World*. The plan of such a poem had been in his mind for years. In 1878, when Stanley returned from Africa, virtually the first person whom he visited was Arnold, then at work on his life of Buddha. Stanley read the poem before it was given to the public and was deeply impressed. "Now if you would take the Christ as the central figure of such a poem," he said, "and lavish upon it the same wealth of language, you would command an audience as large as the civilized world." The project might well have daunted any poet, and Arnold set it aside, despite Stanley's urging, though he never wholly dismissed it. During the twenty years that followed *The Light of Asia* was steadily in the public eye, and its success led some people to suppose that Arnold was a convert to the religion which he had presented so sympathetically. Others, as we have seen, found it actually subversive of Christianity. Arnold was not disturbed by these criticisms, but he was aware of them, and it is hard to believe that he did not write *The Light of the World* partly, at least, to satisfy those whom he had offended by his earlier poem.

In 1889, during his first visit to America, Arnold offered his poem, then only sketched out, to some American publishers for \$30,000—no small sum in those days. In view of his immense popularity in this country the offer was a tempting one, except for one thing: as a British subject Arnold did not enjoy the protection of the American copyright laws. If the book could not be kept out of the hands of pirates, so large a sum would only be wasted. That fall Arnold went on to Japan with his unwritten poem still unsold. The bulk of it was composed during

the spring and summer of 1890, mostly at Azabu. His procedure was to jot down scraps of verse as they occurred to him, or else to dictate them to Katharine as he walked up and down the room, smoking. In this way he would accumulate a number of fragments which he entered in a ledger until the whole work was nearly finished. Then he would copy out his work into a second book, reorganizing it and polishing it as he did so. This was the rough draft of the poem itself. Finally, he would make a third version, still further polished, for his final text. The fair copy which went to the printer was written in a large, firm hand, with illuminated initials and little pen ornaments lavishly scattered throughout. Some of these would be colored as well, and the covers were designed with no less care.

While in Tokyo, Arnold was invited to give a reading from his manuscript to raise money for some charitable cause. Most of the English and American colony attended, among them a certain Harry Deakin, an art dealer from Yokohama, who was so enthusiastic about the poem that he bought all the American rights for \$25,000. A duplicate copy was sent to Julian Arnold to arrange for publication in England. The plan proposed by the American publishers to evade the copyright problem was for an American poet to collaborate with Arnold to the extent of writing a few lines, to be inserted here and there throughout the poem. The copyright would protect these passages only, and not Arnold's work, but since a pirate would not be able to identify the inserted lines, he could not risk stealing any part. Arnold protested at first, but his objections were finally appeased, and when the poem was printed it bore a warning that the copyright protected the work of an American collaborator. Whoever this man was, he concealed his identity well, and no reviewer was able to guess it, though the name of R. H. Stoddard suggests itself, since he wrote the preface. Julian Arnold thinks it may have been Oliver Wendell Holmes.

*The Light of Asia* had won acceptance largely by the novelty of its theme and because there were few readers competent to



criticize it. The trouble with *The Light of the World* was that everyone felt competent to criticize it. Dealing with the most familiar of all stories and hedged in by the restrictions imposed by sacred tradition, Arnold was faced with the task of doing what the Gospels had already done superlatively well, and without giving offense to anyone. His plan displays ingenuity and is far more complex than the direct and simple narrative of the earlier poem. This very ingenuity, however, makes the story less forceful, since the various flashbacks, the many didactic and lyrical interludes, combined with the device of telling the Gospel story wholly through the eyes of others—all weaken it badly.

The story begins several years after the death of Christ and presents his life and teachings as they were understood by several people who had known him: Pilate and his wife, Mary Magdalene, the girl whom Christ raised from the dead, and one of the three Magi, who has returned to learn news of the child to whom he once brought gifts. The source was, naturally, the New Testament, which Arnold followed closely and often literally. All four Gospels are used, though Mark, which is the scantiest of the four, is drawn on least. The account of the resurrection is based almost entirely on John, even though the authenticity of the fourth Gospel was then under attack by many scholars. Certainly there are many details in which, if the Synoptists were right, John was wrong; but Arnold completely ignored such textual problems and followed whatever reading best suited his purpose. *The Light of the World* was not intended as a critical biography of Jesus, but as a poetic harmony of the Gospels.

Arnold drew, of course, from modern as well as ancient sources for his picture of Christ. The principal nineteenth-century biographers of Jesus were Germans, but of their work he apparently knew little, and the book which influenced him most was *The Life of Christ* by his old friend, Dean Farrar. This must have been constantly at Arnold's side as he wrote, for it determined the guiding principles of the poem. Farrar's life was synthetic, rather than critical. It accepted John as an equal authority with the

Synoptists, it took into account Talmudic and Apocryphal tradition, it assumed without question the possibility of miracles, and it made use of the author's own impressions of the Holy Land for setting and local color. In general it struck a balance between radicalism and orthodoxy: Farrar was not a fundamentalist, but he resolutely rejected the radical speculations of Strauss and Baur. Arnold followed him in all these respects and in many matters of detail as well. The instances of borrowing are many; in fact, whenever one comes across some scrap of learned information, a Hebrew or Aramaic phrase, or some obscure archeological detail, the chances are that Arnold has lifted it intact from Farrar.

The nineteenth century saw a renewed interest among Biblical scholars in the uncanonical books of the New Testament, writings that had been virtually neglected since the Middle Ages. Thanks to the work of Hennecke and Harnack in Germany and of Lightfoot in England, most of these strange writings were available to the general public in Arnold's day. The most popular, if not the most scholarly, of the English editions was Cowper's, from which Arnold took his description of the physical appearance of Christ as it is given in the *Epistle of Lentulus*. The *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy* also attracted him, since it provided material about the childhood of Jesus, a period concerning which the canonical scriptures are silent. After one has read these books, with their tedious miracles and their ignoble pictures of a mischievous, petulant, and vengeful boy Jesus, one wishes that Arnold had left them alone.

The second edition of the poem appearing in 1896 replaced the Hoffman etchings, which had been used to illustrate the first edition, with reproductions of paintings by Holman Hunt. The choice was apt, for Hunt's approach to his subject was very like Arnold's in his love of photographic detail, his interest in the human side of Jesus' character, his moral earnestness, and his sentimental treatment of his subject. When Arnold wrote *The Light of the World* he had two of Hunt's paintings specifically in mind: "The Scapegoat" and "The Shadow of the Cross."

The first shows the sacrificial goat of Leviticus, standing on the bleak, salt-encrusted beach of the Dead Sea; the second is a picture of Jesus as a young man in his carpenter's shop with his hands lifted in prayer. As he stands in the light of the setting sun, his shadow falls against the beams of the rear wall so that beams and shadow together ominously assume the shape of the crucified Christ. Both these pictures so impressed Arnold that he worked exact transcriptions of them into his poem; indeed, so close is the correspondence of mood and subject between poem and paintings that one may almost regard *The Light of the World* as the poetic equivalent of Hunt's work.

The title of *The Light of the World* suggests a deliberate parallel with *The Light of Asia*. It was natural for Arnold to try to repeat the success of his earlier poem and to incorporate into the second some of the features which had made the first popular. For example, he took the liberty of turning the three Magi into Indian Buddhists, so that their presence would give him a chance to retell the Buddhist legends, expound the doctrine, and compare it with Christianity. In style he improved somewhat over *The Light of Asia*: his language is freer, there are no long descriptive catalogues or sentences beginning with relative pronouns, the alliteration is less obvious, there are fewer feminine endings, and fewer of the mannered repetitions that Arnold copied from Tennyson. The Sanskrit words which made *The Light of Asia* so difficult do not appear, but in their place are phrases from Hebrew and Aramaic, used with equal promiscuity. Sometimes their effect is downright grotesque:

and put on the *mitpachath*,  
*Râdîd* and *tsaîph*, as our peasants use.

Usually Arnold stole these stylistic baubles from Farrar. Akin to this practice was his device of spelling familiar names in unfamiliar ways, by substituting a Semitic for a Greek form. Thus Lazarus becomes El'azar, Mary is Miriam, and Nicodemus is Nakdimon. Arnold probably felt that the Gospel names were so familiar that

he welcomed any device that would make them fresher, and while he did achieve a certain specious novelty in this way, the final effect is rather tedious. Eccentricities of spelling are not a good substitute for style. The same is true of Arnold's archaisms, which are almost as frequent here as in *The Light of Asia*. Like Spenser, Arnold "in affecting the ancients, writ no language."

The critics received *The Light of the World* with differing opinions, but without the enthusiasm that had greeted *The Light of Asia*. Farrar found it "a beautiful poem, rich in noble thoughts," but since most of the thoughts were his own, the verdict is not surprising. Stanley, who had urged Arnold to write the poem in the first place, was disappointed, and wrote in his diary that his friend had "not hit the right chord," that the style was "feeble and vapid," and that it was "the tone of an unbeliever." It is sad that Arnold, who had angered the pious by his praise of Buddha, should have annoyed them still more by his praise of Jesus. Other critics were even more harsh. One called it "stilted" and "deficient in strength and dignity," while another attacked its "invertebrate theology, its meretricious style, its gaudy commonplaces and its twaddling sentimentalism." The public agreed with the charges, on the whole, for the poem went into two or three editions only. However, if Arnold failed, it was because he tried too much, for it required a genius to portray Christ well, and not even Milton succeeded in the attempt. Furthermore, Arnold had to live up to his own reputation. *The Light of the World* should have succeeded, for it was built on the same formula that made *The Light of Asia* popular; unfortunately in the intervening twelve years taste in verse had changed, while Arnold had not.

The chief task of Biblical scholarship in the nineteenth century was what Schweitzer called "the quest of the historical Jesus." It was the reverent expectation of the time that a careful and impartial study of the Gospels would eventually disentangle the true character of Jesus from the mass of legend and myth with which it had become overlaid, in order that the historical figure



might emerge, more noble and beautiful than orthodoxy had ever imagined. This attitude was adopted by the theological *avant garde* down until the First World War, and it is still the generally accepted view of liberals today. To this liberal school of interpreters Arnold belonged, for he was convinced that orthodoxy had never really appreciated the figure it professed to worship. The quest of the historical Jesus was a failure, however. The texts proved obscure and contradictory, and only one fact emerged clearly: that Jesus was an enigma to the men of his own time, including the evangelists. The historical Christ of the nineteenth century was as much a creation of theology as the traditional figure had been, for it seems impossible to write about Jesus without theological preconceptions of some kind. We may ignore, therefore, the question of whether Jesus was in very fact as Arnold represented him and confine our attention to Arnold's theology as we find it in *The Light of the World*.

This theology was a Christocentric Unitarianism: Christocentric in that Jesus is regarded as the most perfect revelation of God's truth yet made to man, and Unitarian in that he is definitely not considered as being himself God. Divine he may be in the very perfection of his humanity, but truly man nonetheless, and to emphasize his humanity, Arnold insisted, is not to degrade him but to make his life the more miraculous. Jesus, for Arnold, represented the utmost perfection of humanity, and that perfection was his title to divinity. The clear implication is that human goodness is continuous with God's, lesser in dignity but not different in nature, so that man when sufficiently purged and elevated may pass into deity. Orthodox Protestantism, on the other hand, teaches that because of man's corruption his goodness is discontinuous with God's, so that his righteousness can never win him salvation. Arnold, in common with the other liberals of his day and ours, would have nothing to do with this doctrine of original sin, which he regarded as a blasphemy and an insult to the Creator. He refused to believe that the alienation of God and man was so complete as

orthodoxy supposed. For him sin was not corruption but incompleteness.

If man is not radically alienated from God, there is no work of reconciliation to be accomplished and no propitiatory sacrifice to be made. In common with other liberals, Arnold rejected the traditional doctrine of the Atonement. "Fear not," he once wrote, "it is God's pleasure to GIVE you the kingdom. You don't have to snivel for it." The redemptive work of Christ, since it could not be accomplished by shedding blood, was therefore one of touching men's hearts by precept and example; it was a reconciliation of man to God rather than of God to man. For both the liberal and the orthodox, the end product of the work of redemption is the "Kingdom of Heaven," but the two differ radically in the meaning they attach to the phrase. In the primitive church, it was believed that Christ initiated a new reign, shortly to be ushered in by a general cataclysm in which the existing world would be destroyed, the wicked cast into hell, and the saints enthroned in the sight of God. The nineteenth century thought of the Kingdom as the outcome of historical processes, something to be realized on earth, gradually and by human endeavor, rather than at the end of time. By this interpretation, Christ was conceived as the founder of the Kingdom, but only remotely and by anticipation; his task was to teach men the principles which they themselves must apply in order to create a perfect society.

For the orthodox Christian, the work of redemption is done and cannot be repeated. For the liberal, redemption demands the progressive transformation of mankind here on earth, and consequently Christ's work is still incomplete. One danger of this belief is that it tempts one to identify the cosmic drama of salvation with the immediate historic issues of the day and to make the coming of Christ's kingdom depend too closely on the next vote in Parliament. For instance, in the opening lines of his poem, Arnold enumerates the fruits of Christianity, as accomplished by the precept and example of its founder:

This Babe, born lowlily,  
Should—past dispute, since now achieved is this—  
Bring Earth great gifts of blessing and of bliss;  
Date from that crib the Dynasty of Love;  
Strip his misused thunderbolts from Jove;  
Bend to their knees Rome's Caesars, break the chain  
From the slave's neck; set sick hearts free again  
Bitterly bound by priests, and scribes, and scrolls;  
And heal with balm of pardon sinking souls;  
Should mercy to her vacant seat restore,  
Teach Right to Kings, and Patience to the poor,  
Should by His sweet Name all names overthrow,  
And by His lovely words the quick seeds sow  
Of golden equities, and brotherhood,  
Of Pity, Peace, and gentle praise of Good;  
Of knightly honor, holding life in trust  
For God, and Lord, and all things pure and just;  
Lowly to Woman; for maid Mary's sake  
Lifting our sister from the dust, to take  
In homes her equal place, the Household's Queen,  
Crowned and august who sport and thrall had been;  
Of arts adorning Life, of charities  
Gracious and wide, because the impartial skies  
Roof one race in;<sup>1</sup>

Note how closely this passage reflects the social ideals of the Victorian age: here is a reference to the feminist movement (lifting our sister from the dust), the bourgeois ideal of domesticity (the household's queen), the respect for industry and technology (arts adorning life), the anti-slavery movement (break the chain from the slave's neck), social service (charities large and wide), romantic medievalism (knightly honor), and social reform by non-violent means (teach right to kings and patience to the poor). In trying to make Jesus a human figure, Arnold has turned him into a typical Victorian reformer.

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1 *The Light of the World*, 141-142.

One of the most persistent features of Arnold's thought was the way in which he universalized religion, emphasizing those aspects of it which are most universally valid, least time-bound and parochial. For Arnold any truth that was confined to one nation or institution was not the whole truth. Accordingly, in writing a poem about the founder of Christianity, he made no reference to the Church, so that one may look in vain for any allusion to the Last Supper, or to the day of Pentecost, or to the events in the Book of Acts. Sacramental religion meant nothing to him, and the Church was scarcely more than the agent of the systematic corruption of Christ's teaching. Just as he could not admit of a special revelation to one church, so he could not allow it to one chosen people. Therefore he minimized the continuity of Christianity with Judaism. He made no mention of the Old Testament prophets, or of the Messianic hope; nowhere does he refer to Christ as the Messiah or the Son of David, and whenever Judaism is mentioned at all it is to contrast the law of Moses with the new law of Love. Arnold, in his desire to make Jesus a universal teacher, minimized every feature that would stamp him as a man of his own time.

Just as the liberal will not confine revelation to one time or place, so he is unwilling to limit God in any way. For this reason, he is usually an immanentist or pantheist and rejects any theology that sets God outside or above His creation; instead he seeks God in nature and in the human soul. In Arnold this natural tendency toward pantheism was reinforced by his knowledge of the Indian scriptures.

Arnold is best remembered as the author of *The Light of Asia*, but *The Light of the World* is the completest exposition of his religious views. In this poem we see him as a man deeply religious and magnificently unorthodox. He was possessed of a faith which no personal misfortune could shake, the guiding principles of which were harmony, universality, and progress. Whatever may be the value of the poem as a work of art, it is of interest as



Arnold's spiritual testament and as a characteristic statement of the religious liberalism of the later nineteenth century. Indeed, Arnold's fault was that he reflected the beliefs of his age all too faithfully; had he been more at odds with his own times he might have more to say to us today.

## CHAPTER XI

# SCIENCE AND RELIGION

When Fanny Arnold died in 1889, her husband was grief-stricken, but not inconsolable, for he had the consolation of a firm belief in the immortality of the soul. This belief formed a major and recurring theme in his writings for nearly fifty years. The question was one which preoccupied the men of that period, assuming a greater importance than it had in the previous century, when immortality was generally unquestioned, or than it was to do in the century following, when men would be generally content to dismiss the matter. As the traditional Christian belief began to disintegrate under the impact of Victorian science, those who could not reconcile the old beliefs with the new began to re-examine the question of human survival; some turned to philosophy to provide them with the consolation they would not accept from religion, while others preferred the excitement of spiritualism and the occult sciences. Nearly every phase of the controversy can be illustrated from Arnold's writings, which touch on most of the theories of survival held in his day.

His earliest poems include several pieces that touch on the question of immortality. "The Mourner" and "All Saints' Day" are typical; they contain nothing inconsistent with the traditional Christian orthodoxy which Arnold soon put behind him. His views on the future life were much enlarged by his Indian experiences and by his discovery of the doctrine of rebirth. There is a discussion of transmigration in *The Light of Asia*, and in 1885 he treated the subject again in *The Secret of Death*, an adaptation of portions of the *Katha Upanishad*. The theme of the poem is the Hindu belief that the individual soul, or *atman*, is ultimately one with the universal soul, or *brahman*, so that both death and birth are equally illusory. It is hard to tell how far Arnold accepted the various Oriental doctrines which he presented so per-

suasively. One feels in most cases that he regarded them as plausible rather than proven, and that he was more ready to capitalize on them for literary purposes than to swallow them without question. He accepted the theory of transmigration in this spirit, regarding it as eminently reasonable and even probable, so that it amused him to speculate how he would improve his time in future lives, studying music, reading books still unwritten, and so forth.

Arnold's two most popular short poems were undoubtedly "She and He" and "He Who Died at Azan," both of which won wide circulation by being reprinted as an appendix to *The Light of Asia*. The first sprang, as we have already seen, from his grief at Katharine's death. It presents a picture of a husband lingering by the body of his dead wife, kissing her as he had while she was alive and begging her to reveal to him "the secret of dying." The answer comes in words audible to the hearing of the "soul, not ear":

Who will believe that he heard her say  
 With the sweet soft voice, in the dear old way:—  
 "The utmost wonder is this—I hear  
 And see you, and love you, and kiss you, Dear:  
 And am your angel, who was your bride,  
 And know that, though dead, I have never died."

"He Who Died at Azan," also called "After Death in Arabia," is a similar message of consolation from the dead to the living, in this case from an Arab to those who dig his grave:

Farewell, friends! Yet not farewell;  
 Where I am, ye too shall dwell.  
 I am gone before your face  
 A heart-beat's time, a grey ant's pace.  
 When ye come where I have stepped,  
 Ye will marvel why ye wept.

Though Arnold wrote verses about the communication of the dead with the living, he was not a confirmed spiritualist. He was

deeply interested in the subject, however, because of a strange adventure that befell him. On August 19, 1876, he was in London, walking near the corner of Arundel Street and the Strand, when he chanced to see his friend, George Smith, the Assyriologist, looking into a shop window. Arnold was surprised, for he had thought Smith was in the Near East, but he hurried up, happy to see his friend again. At that moment Smith turned a corner and—vanished. There were no doorways into which he could have gone. Only later did word come that Smith had died of a fever that same day in Aleppo. This story, told by Julian Arnold in one of his early books, will be accepted or rejected by the reader according to the convictions which he already holds, for no one is ever wholly satisfied with the ghosts which other people see. Since Arnold says nothing of the incident in his own writing, we do not know how much importance he attached to it, but it certainly must have encouraged him to look into the matter further. In this he was probably stimulated further by his friendship with Richard Burton, who was deeply interested in the spirit world and who believed himself to have clairvoyant powers.

In 1882 we find Arnold a member of the Society for Psychical Research, which was founded in that year and which included among its early members such men as Lord Tennyson, Andrew Lang, A. J. Balfour, William James, Sir William Crookes, and others. An attempt was made to secure the support of Charles Darwin as well, but the naturalist was skeptical and reluctant to help, replying in a letter to Arnold that he believed that “the endless silly beliefs of mankind can be corrected only by the slow advance of accurate knowledge, and not by arguing.” Arnold, however, began to attend seances, especially after Fanny’s death, and soon accumulated a long list of spooky experiences. On one occasion, for instance, a telepathist was giving a demonstration of her powers. Arnold wrote his wife’s name in Persian script on a slip of paper and folded it tightly; the medium answered that she could not read the writing, but that she could hear it, and that it sounded like “Fanny.”



Interest in problems of death and immortality was not confined to the spiritualists: on a more philosophical level it occupied some of the most acute minds of the day. Broadly speaking, the arguments for and against human survival rest on grounds that have not changed much since Plato, but in the nineteenth century the age-old debate took on certain features especially characteristic of the period. In the first place, one is struck by the fact that, in contrast with earlier centuries, those who believed in immortality were on the defensive. In the books and magazine articles and debates of the day the unexpressed assumption usually was that extinction is the most obvious fate of the soul, the burden of proof being cast on those who held the contrary. Secondly, a subject that had been treated as a religious and theological issue was humanized and secularized. Even the churchmen tended to approach it philosophically, without especial reliance on revelation or the beliefs of the Church. Finally, there was a marked effort on the part of all to bring scientific knowledge to bear on the problem as had not been done before.

All these tendencies can be illustrated by a magazine article by Arnold, the most systematic discussion of immortality which he ever wrote, entitled "Death and Afterwards." It appeared originally in the *Fortnightly Review* and was expanded into a small volume published by Trübner in 1887. The subject had the same sure-fire appeal that made "He Who Died at Azan" famous. Some fifteen printings appeared in England, as well as several in the United States, making this little book Arnold's most popular work after *The Light of Asia*. It begins with the admission that the state of human consciousness after death will always be a mystery. Nevertheless, it argues, the world about us contains hints and suggestions which indicate that the age-old hope of immortality is not a pathetic delusion after all. Life itself is a sufficient miracle to make nothing else impossible; the continuity of existence in amoebic protoplasm, the strange metamorphoses of the insect, the mysteries of heredity—all these give intimations of immortality, and beside these wonders life after death seems neither miraculous nor

even improbable. This argument, as Arnold acknowledged, was a refurbishing of Bishop Butler's argument from analogy, save that he did not try to reason from the existence of a benevolent God, as Butler was able to do. In place of the Christian God, he envisioned a benevolent world-process, impersonal but trustworthy, which served much the same function as the orthodox Deity.

The second argument was a psychological one—the old and familiar argument *ex consensu gentium*. There is, so he maintained, implanted in every man an expectation, perhaps an intuition of immortality. Since every other human instinct has its proper gratification, it is reasonable to suppose that this should also. The argument will not bear too close examination. What appears to be a desire for immortality is really only a wish for continuation of corporeal existence, or something like it, and this wish is in fact granted to man during every minute of his life except the last. To argue that because a man wishes to live, then he will always do so, is as logical as to maintain that because a man is hungry he will always find food.

Arnold's third argument was based on a firm belief in the developing continuity of life, in an evolution both physical and spiritual pointing toward higher levels of being yet unreached. Just as the shellfish can know nothing of mammalian life and the lower mammals cannot imagine what goes on in the mind of the human, so we cannot guess what life in the angelic spheres may be, but we need not therefore deny the possibility that such life may exist. This argument assumes a benevolent and reliable evolutionary process which guarantees for man a higher destiny than any he has yet known. Such a belief was almost a dogma among liberals of the last century, but it has faded under the impact of the tragic events of the past forty years. The "progress of mankind onward and upward forever" no longer seems as inevitable as it once did. Indeed, it is likely that no one was ever converted to belief or disbelief in immortality by force of argument alone. "Death and Afterwards," however, is not really so much a logical argument as it is a rhapsody on the wonder and beauty

of a universe so vast and mysterious that the immortality of the soul may well be among its roster of miracles. Arnold contributed nothing new to the old controversy, except the fervor with which he addressed himself to the theme. He realized, of course, that conclusive proof of survival could never be had, but in the absence of such proof he was able to face death calmly and with confidence of being born to other things.

Before publishing this pamphlet Arnold submitted it to "two very distinguished men of science" with a request that they criticize and comment on it. Who they were we do not know, but the gesture shows a characteristically Victorian concern for the reconciliation of philosophic and religious truth with science. This concern, which is one of the central intellectual currents of the century, has been called "the warfare of science with religion"; actually it could better be called a process of mutual adjustment. Battles there were, but after each skirmish there followed a period of peace-making and mediation. The mediators were usually of lesser stature than the warriors: Lyman Abbott, for instance, was not comparable with Darwin. Frequently they were also popularizers who tried to acquaint the general public with the intellectual issues of the times by means of the pulpit, the lecture platform, and the popular magazines. The scientist may look down on such men as mere lay journalists, but they perform a necessary task, the value of which the expert does not always appreciate; it is they, rather than the scientific giants, who are the typical intellectual figures of their day.

In this work of mediation and popularization, Arnold played an honorable part. Himself a layman, he possessed far more than the average man's knowledge of science, was a member of several scientific societies and counted among his friends many of the leading scientists of the day. Among his correspondents were Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, J. S. Mill, and the geologists James Geikie and John Ball. William Crookes was a friend and used to bring his half-completed inventions to Arnold's house; Julian Arnold recalls how Crookes and his father labored together one afternoon

testing a radiometer. Another friend was Sir John Lubbock, the entomologist, whose experiments with ants Arnold followed with close interest and described in some of his essays. Once he offered to bring Lubbock some white ants from India for study, but the entomologist wisely replied, "No, I would not be the man to introduce the white ant into Great Britain for all in the cellars of the Bank of England!"

In short, Arnold's interest in science was almost as intense as in religion, and he naturally devoted much thought to uniting their various insights in one comprehensive system. For him the warfare of science and religion was over—he had found a synthesis of the two which seemed to work, at least for his own day. His task as a journalist and lecturer was to state this synthesis in terms the average reader could understand. The guiding principles of his belief, both in science and religion, were harmony, universality, and progress. The temper of his mind was harmonistic, in that he understood reality in terms of reason, order, and harmony, rather than in terms of will, or dynamic process, or conflict. For him the universe had to be of one piece; there could be no cracks in the order of things. Such a philosophy must be optimistic, and so there was no place for tragedy in his *Weltanschauung*. In an address delivered in the Town Hall at Birmingham in 1893 as President of the Midlands Institute, Arnold summed up the accumulated reflection of a lifetime. He took sharp issue with pessimism in any form, declaring that such a view of life might have been pardonable in earlier, less cultivated times, but that it was anachronistic in the nineteenth century. Interestingly enough, he criticized not only the pessimists, citing Schopenhauer and Leopardi as types, but also a man who is not usually considered one: Thomas Huxley. In May of the same year Huxley had delivered his celebrated Romanes lecture, in which he pointed out that ethics may often be in conflict with nature and that human progress depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, but in fighting it. Arnold chose to rebut this point, for to one of his temper such a statement was incomprehensible. He could not admit that one part of life—



the realm of morality—could be in conflict with the rest and argued that the mere existence of morality was sufficient grounds for including it in the realm of the “natural” as one more product of the evolutionary process. Not only is morality natural, he felt, but nature is moral, so that in the social instincts of the insect and the mother-love of the animal there can be seen adumbrations of the same law of love that man knows more fully.

Huxley posed another question at the same lecture: why, among all the infinite possibilities that a God might have chosen in creating the world, was one actually chosen in which sin and pain abound? Arnold admitted the force of the argument, then brushed it aside with the answer that pain had been made obsolete by anaesthesia, while sin was on the decline, as could be demonstrated from the penal statistics of Great Britain. Any unexplained residuum of natural evil could be dismissed either as evidence that the evolutionary process is incomplete, or as an illusion rooted in man’s imperfect knowledge. Sin, by this interpretation, is only that baser metal as yet untransmuted by the philosopher’s stone of progress, and God will not judge us too harshly for it. In the middle of the twentieth century it seems almost incredible that anyone could have made such a statement: it was Arnold’s fate to express the attitudes of his own generation so faithfully that he often has little to say to the next.

In all the warfare between science and religion in the nineteenth century, no hotter battles were fought than over the theory of evolution. Everyone knows how doggedly the more conservative wing of the church fought the new ideas, but we sometimes forget how many of the clergy lost no time in welcoming the theory of evolution into the sanctuary and putting it to work in the service of the Lord. Once the admission had been made that man’s creation and his redemption were not single events but long drawn-out processes, it was easy to argue that evolution, far from being subversive to religion, was actually a vindication of God’s ways to man. This was the position taken by the liberal wing of Protestantism and ultimately accepted by all but the most fundamentalist

churches: it was Arnold's position too. For him evolution was not just a theory of the biologists; it was a cosmic principle, linking all creation in a great chain of being, from the simplest molecule, sweeping in a rising curve through sage and saint, until humanity merged in Deity. Behind this process he traced the hand of a vast, impersonal, omnipresent "brooding power of good," guiding all lives to higher and better levels. In natural selection and the law of the survival of the fittest he saw "such a passionate impulse and effort toward universal amelioration that of themselves they might furnish a religion and a worship."

For Arnold the reconciliation of science and religion did not stop with Christianity. As an exponent of Buddhism he believed that the same optimistic faith which he found in Christianity and in science was to be found in the Oriental religions as well. In Darwinism, for example, he saw a modern restatement of the law of karma, while he twisted the law of the conservation of energy until somehow it proved the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration. He set forth these opinions in an address delivered on December 15, 1889, in Tokyo under the auspices of the Japanese Educational Society. The address is evidence of the extent to which his ideas had developed in the ten years since he had written *The Light of Asia*. In that poem he had been content to present Buddhism in all its picturesque novelty, but without much originality of thought and interpretation. By 1889 he had worked out for himself a full-scale synthesis of Buddhism, Christianity, and Victorian science. The consistency and comprehensiveness of his thought is impressive; it was generously inclusive, yet it was all of one piece. It was nothing less than a real meeting of East and West that he envisioned: a fusion of the highest and best in both cultures. His synthesis may have been premature, but it is not his fault that his dream now seems farther from realization than it did sixty years ago.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Arnold's respect for Buddhist values was more than theoretical. For a time, at least, he was a vegetarian and served as vice president of a short-lived vegetarian society in Bavswater. The president was an obscure Hindu, then living in London, named Mohandas K. Gandhi.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LAST YEARS: 1892-1904

On October 6, 1892, Alfred Tennyson died, and Arnold, who was once again settled in London, lost no time in writing a tribute to the laureate; his poem was dated, in fact, the very same day. He had never known Tennyson closely, except as in the course of public life one poet may happen to meet another, but Tennyson had been, nevertheless, the strongest literary influence on him. He had guided the formation of Arnold's early style, and now, in later life, he came closest to his ideal of the successful national bard, such as Arnold himself wished to be. The two men were neighbors, after a fashion, for Arnold once bought some land for a summer house—never built—on Hindhead, only a short distance from Tennyson's home at Haslemere. Furthermore, he had some acquaintance with Tennyson's son and daughter-in-law, whom he had met in Delhi in 1885. This was a slim basis for a friendship, but Arnold made the most of it, and liked to hint in his writing that he and the laureate were on terms of great intimacy. There is an article of his in *The Forum*, entitled "A Day With Lord Tennyson," which is certainly intended to give that impression. It describes a visit that Arnold paid on Tennyson at Haslemere and represents the laureate as complimenting him on his verse, asking his help in some philanthropic project, escorting him part way to the station, and begging him to come back often. When the interview was published without Tennyson's knowledge in December, 1891, the old man was furious and angrily declared that Arnold's story was full of lies.

When Tennyson died soon thereafter, many felt—Arnold among them—that the author of *The Light of Asia* was the logical successor to the laureateship. Indeed, there were not many rivals. Browning was dead, Swinburne was not really respectable, despite his long residence with Watts-Dunton, Kipling was in the bad

graces of the Queen, Bridges was hardly known, and too many other late Victorians wrote in a minor key scarcely befitting the official bard of a great empire. According to Julian Arnold, the Queen favored the claims of the poet-editor, whose verses were often by her side, but Gladstone, a liberal in politics and a fundamentalist in religion, opposed Arnold on both counts. Strong words passed between Victoria and the prime Minister, and then the subject was avoided on both sides until Gladstone resigned in March, 1894. Lord Rosebery followed. Although a Liberal, his views on foreign policy coincided more closely with Arnold's than his predecessor's, and Arnold's chances probably improved somewhat. A cartoon in *Punch* by Linley Sambourne commented on Rosebery's dilemma. It was entitled "The Apple of Discord" and showed the prime minister as Paris, about to toss the golden apple (marked "laureate") before the rival goddesses: Venus (Arnold) Juno (Lewis Morris) and Minerva (Austin). Of the three, Arnold is well in the foreground and is shown walking up to Rosebery with a distinctly flirtatious look in his eye. Rosebery passed out of office, however, with his mind still not made up, and it fell to his successor, the Marquess of Salisbury, to appoint Alfred Austin to the laureateship, largely because of his services to Tory journalism. Arnold immediately sent his congratulations in the following telegram:

Accept my heartiest congratulations with which no grudge mingles, although I myself expected the appointment. I rejoice at the continuance of this appointment, which will be worthily and patriotically borne by you. Edwin Arnold.

Austin reprinted the telegram in his autobiography, commenting that he "would rather be the man who could send such a telegram, in such circumstances, than be incapable of sending, yet have written the greatest of poems." For Austin, of course, the choice was wholly academic.

The nineties saw no falling off in Arnold's production; in fact, he published more books in the ten years from 1891 to 1901 than



in any other decade of his life. He also began to exploit a new theme: ancient Egypt. One of his youthful poems, "The Egyptian Princess," had touched on that period of history; now he reverted to it and found there the same opportunities for gorgeous and colorful description that he had in India. While on his lecture tour in America one of the poems which proved a sure favorite with any audience was a little piece suggested by a pair of Egyptian slippers in the British museum. It is only a trifle, written in a very light style, but it is graceful and combines a gay touch with a sense of the pathos of vanished civilizations. More ambitious was his poem "Potiphar's Wife," which was probably written about 1890, and which he read at the Lotos Club during his second American visit. The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife is one of those Old Testament tales which were taken over into the Koran. In the Islamic world it enjoyed a popularity such as it never had in Christendom. In Persian literature it was treated by many different authors, the most famous of whom was the poet Jami (1414-1492). This version, called "Yusuf and Zulaikha," is a long poem somewhat resembling "Venus and Adonis" in its plot and is one of the standard classics of Persian literature. Arnold's version owes little to the Bible and is based almost entirely on "Yusuf and Zulaikha," as translated by the English Orientalist, Ralph Griffith. "Potiphar's Wife" is the most erotic of all Arnold's poems. The reader is not likely to be shocked by the perfumed seductiveness of the heroine, Asenath, nor by her somewhat theatrical passion, but Arnold's contemporaries were, and the Boston poetess, Louise Chandler Moulton, exclaimed:

Does not this frank story of the fair Asenath, the wife of Potiphar, belong to "the locked book-case"? Surely no French novel was ever more realistic.

These two poems, "Potiphar's Wife" and "Egyptian Slippers," were collected in one volume in 1892, entitled *Potiphar's Wife and Other Poems*. To them he added his youthful poem, "The Egyptian Princess," which seemed to belong with the other two by

virtue of its theme. Eight Japanese poems followed, some of them being verses which had already appeared in *Seas and Lands* or *Japonica*. The most ambitious was "The No Dance," a description of a Japanese ballet, which won the praises of most reviewers. The last section of the book includes a number of very miscellaneous poems, all minor.

Similar in scope and spirit was a volume which appeared a few years later called *The Tenth Muse and Other Poems*. The title poem was written for a press anniversary and is a solemn ode in praise of journalism, bidding the nine daughters of Mnemosyne to make room in their midst for a tenth, Ephemera, the muse of the modern press. Arnold's traditional interest in India appears in two poems, one a translation from the thirteenth book of the *Mahabharata*, entitled "The Story of the Snake." In style and matter it belongs with his collection of *Indian Idylls*. A great many translations from the Persian fill the last thirty pages of the book, including selections from the *Gulistan* of Sa'di which were later gathered in one volume in 1899. By far the best poems in the collection are a group of translations from the Japanese. Here Arnold's tendency to over-write was kept within bounds by the terseness of his models and the graphic clarity of their imagery.

In 1893 he was elected President of the Midlands Institute, a school in Birmingham, in succession to Professor Huxley and other distinguished men. The appointment was an honorary one, with no administrative tasks. At his inauguration he delivered the address which was published under the title "Aspects of Life," and which we have mentioned in the previous chapter. There were other projects to keep him busy. Major Pond kept writing to arrange for another lecture tour, and there was the affair of the Gaya temple which deeply interested him in 1893 and 1894. He planned to visit India again to negotiate with the priest who controlled the shrine, but nothing came of the project. In 1895 he took a vacation from the whirl of politics and society and editorial work long enough to make a tour of southern France and Spain with his son William.

1896 was a busy year. In addition to his regular work, he published, early in the year, a collection of miscellaneous essays called *East and West*. It is much like *Wandering Words*, consisting mainly of reminiscences of India and Japan. In March he went for a month's holiday in the Canary Islands, taking with him the Sanskrit and Latin texts of the Indian love poem, *Chaurapanchastika*. Each morning before breakfast he would sit in the gardens of Orotava on Teneriffe, at work on an English verse translation. The book was not printed but lithographed in facsimile, with both the Sanskrit and English texts reproduced in Arnold's own hand and illustrated by gay little vignettes done in water color. In May he went to Moscow for the *Telegraph* to report the coronation of the Czar. Despite his ancient dislike of Russian imperialism, he had a fine time in Moscow, dining at the Embassy and hobnobbing with a crowd of English and Russian nobility.

In September of 1896 Queen Victoria celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of her reign, and Arnold greeted the jubilee with a little book entitled *Victoria, Queen and Empress*. It was a glowing survey of the achievements of the reign, dwelling especially on the advance of science and the growth of the British Empire. He also wrote a long and bombastic poem in honor of the occasion, entitled "Queen's Day." This was done at the request of a certain Mr. Kessanly, who wrote Arnold on stationery of the *Salon* magazine, asking for an appropriate piece and suggesting that Arnold relinquish his claim to the copyright. Kessanly did not explain that he was an advertising agent, and Arnold submitted the poem under the impression that he had sold it for publication in *The Salon*. Instead it appeared in *The Times* of September 23 as part of an advertisement for Bovril. Arnold was furious and protested angrily both to the paper and to Kessanly, but the damage was done. Whatever the law may have said, it is clear that Arnold was the victim of a piece of sharp practice which his years and position ought to have spared him.

In 1897 he married Tama Kurokawa under English law, and moved with her to a new house in Bolton Gardens, Kensington.

Tama, as it turned out, was destined to be his nurse, rather than his wife, for by November of the same year he began to complain of a "nasty bout of gout, or rheumatism, or something." This illness was the beginning of the end, for it soon proved not to be rheumatism, but some neurological disease which caused a slow but inexorable paralysis of the lower part of the body. By January he was obliged to travel almost entirely by carriage, though he could still walk a little. That spring or summer he took a cottage for a time at Grasmere in the Lake District, but continued ill-health forced him to return home.

At no time in Arnold's life did his robust courage and resolute faith show more brightly than in the trials that now came on him. Fortunately his illness touched his body only and left his mind clear and active. He still wrote editorials for the *Telegraph*, dictating them when his strength was not equal to the task. He continued to write books, also: *The Queen's Justice* and the *Gulistan* are the product of these years. Then for a time in 1900 his health improved, and once again he was able to go to his office. The improvement offered only false hope, however, and Arnold was soon worse than before, for to his paralysis was now added blindness, which grew on him so that he was soon obliged to write by dictation. For the last year of his life he was completely blind.

During 1901, after this new affliction had closed in on him, he wrote his last poem: *The Voyages of Ithobal*. The subject was suggested by a passage in Herodotus, referring to a voyage around Africa accomplished in the days of the Pharaoh Neco by Phoenician sailors in the king's employ. Out of one paragraph in the Greek original Arnold spun a poem of two hundred pages, describing in detail the long trip down the east coast of Africa, around the Cape, and back through the straits of Gibraltar. In part the poem was a tribute to another African explorer, Stanley, and many of the details came from Stanley's writings. Stylistically *Ithobal* is no improvement over Arnold's earlier work, and the reviews which greeted it were courteous but restrained.



The next few years must have been very dark for Arnold, save as they were lighted by his own courage and the devoted attendance of his wife. Though he published no more books, he continued to write essays and verse, some of which appeared in English and American magazines. He also dictated editorials from time to time, his last being in connection with the Russo-Japanese war, which interested him deeply. Death came at last on the morning of March 24, 1904. He had been bedridden for about a week, slowly losing strength, and on that morning announced quietly, "I think I am dying." The end came at ten-thirty.

The rest of the story is quickly told. Arnold had often expressed a desire to be buried at sea or else cremated, and it fell to Lester, as the eldest son, to light the funeral pyre and watch the reduction of the body to ashes. The remains were placed in the chapel at University College, Oxford, and a scholarship established by subscription in his memory for the encouragement of Oriental studies. The tablet below his urn bears this inscription:

In Memory of

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD, M.A., K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

Sometime member of this College,

and

Principal of the Deccan College,

Poona.

Born, June 10th, 1832.

Died, March 24th, 1904.

Whose ashes are here deposited.

Newdigate Prizeman, 1852.

He found in his sympathy with

Eastern religious thought

Inspiration for his great

Poetical Gifts.

The obituaries that recorded his death all spoke of his achievements, and almost every one pointed out that the enormous popu-

larity of his poetry in the 1880's had largely died away. Arnold as a poet had outlived his reputation. In fact, the tide had begun to turn against him a dozen years before, and there is no indication that it will ever turn back. Poetry speaks a different language now. Today Arnold is remembered only as the author of two poems: *The Light of Asia* and *The Song Celestial*, both of which are occasionally reprinted and still read. The latter is probably Arnold's best work and will remain in favor until someone produces a new verse translation that surpasses it. *The Light of Asia* is still the best poetical life of Buddha in English for those who want such things, but now that the Pali Canon has been translated most English Buddhists will prefer to go to the original sources for information about their religion. For the rest, Arnold wrote as a journalist—that is, hastily and without caring whether his work was good or bad, so long as it was fluent and reasonably interesting. Certainly no one need suppose that his education is incomplete until he has read the minor works of Edwin Arnold.

To find the true stature of the man, however, more must be considered than his poetry. The mere bulk of his work commands some respect, and his versatility is remarkable by anyone's standards. He was a man who won recognition as a journalist, lecturer, and poet, who was a force in politics and a patron of scholarship and exploration, who mastered a dozen languages and a half-dozen religions, who enjoyed the friendship and respect of many of the great men of his day. Add to this an unfailing charm of character, a cheerful heart, an eager love of learning that never left him, a valiant and chivalrous spirit, and it is apparent that here was no ordinary man. His permanent achievement was to popularize a knowledge of Oriental religion with a wide audience and to serve his generation as a bridge between the East and the West. To do this he had to fight the twin enemies of ignorance and bigotry, enemies which he overcame without the use of a single bitter word: his whole life was spent expounding the truth of religions other than Christianity, and yet he never spoke irreverently of the faith in which he was reared. Today ignorance and

bigotry are as rampant as ever, and the misunderstandings that separate man from man, race from race, and nation from nation, bid fair to destroy civilization itself. Arnold may be neglected, and his books unread, but who shall say that his message is not as urgent today as it was seventy-five years ago?

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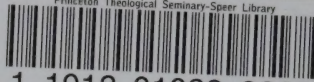
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